

Community MOMENTS



John Black

Financial Manager & Senior Controller

RealManage Houston

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4	Employee Spotlight: John Black
6	Board Spotlight: Keith Oliver Idaho Creek HOA
8	Mary's Corner Rule And Enforcement Development III
10	Managing Parking for Family Visitors

It is hard to believe that we are in the last month of 2018. The year has sure flown by! It is at this point in the year that we reflect on all our accomplishments, and cherish the time we have spent serving all of our client communities. This is also the time of year when we eagerly look forward to quality time with our family and friends.

As the president of our organization, I want to express my sincerest gratitude for the opportunity to serve each one of your communities every day. We are committed to be that management company that runs with integrity and always endeavors to do the right thing, and listen to our clients and employees so that we may continue to grow and serve better. The clients we serve and our employees inspire me every day and make working for this organization a true pleasure.

Wishing each of you a joyous holiday season, and best wishes for a joyful and prosperous 2019!

Chris Ayoub
President, RealManage



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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

John Black

FINANCIAL MANAGER & SENIOR CONTROLLER
REALMANAGE HOUSTON



John Black joined RealManage on February 14, 2017, which is fitting as John's arrival and local presence in Houston put the "heart" back into the accounting service level we provide to our clients and team. John's eighteen years in the association management industry has found him in multiple positions including that of a branch president for a national corporation allowing John to understand fully and speak the language of accounting and management simultaneously.

John's current role as Financial Manager and Senior Controller allows him to share his knowledge and expertise in both planning and educating those he engages with regularly. This includes not only our board members and homeowners but also, more importantly our staff, which illustrates our core value of Always Improving. By taking the time to explain the "why" behind certain processes and procedures or certain accounting principles, John ensures we have the best-trained and prepared teammates serving our clients, and this is key to our retention. John's belief is — *"An integral part of our industry is the enforcement of rules and collection of assessments. While necessary to run a successful community association, these actions often elicit a very negative reaction from owners. Good communication is essential to help overcome this problem. I believe in transparency of information for owners and educating them on why certain actions are necessary"*.

When asked about what he enjoys most about RealManage he says, *"I really enjoy the team atmosphere. Most companies try to promote the 'one team' concept but at RealManage I see it lived out every day. Our successes are shared as a team success. Employees are valued and thanked for their contributions to the team. Even more than that, everyone is willing to help each other at a moment's notice when needed. I have seen this from top to bottom within the organization"*.

When not working, John is an active volunteer with his son's high school band, including equipment set up for their numerous marching contests. Outside of parental duties, however, John is an avid sports fan, particularly the Houston Texans and has some culinary arts passions, such as dabbling in local BBQ competitions and brewing craft beer.

Written by **Sandra Vela Mora, PCAM®**
Senior Vice President – Houston

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Keith Oliver

IDAHO CREEK HOA

LONGMONT, CO



When you picture a selfless board member who truly wants to do what is best for the Association and its members, Keith Oliver is a shining example. Keith moved to the *Idaho Creek HOA* in Longmont, Colorado in 2008. At the time, under their prior board and prior management company, there was a lack of community spirit. There were also several vendors who would no longer do work for the association due to strained relations stemming from late payment of their invoices.

Keith became fed up with the lack of care that was given to his community and decided to make changes for the betterment of the association. He volunteered to serve on the board of directors and was elected to President of the board in 2016. The board changed management companies to RealManage, so they would have transparency for their members and a partner to assist with their mission to involve members of the community in board decisions and to rebuild vendor relationships. Keith not only worked hard to mend bruised relations with vendors, he also made an effort to ensure board decisions were not self-serving and included input from the members whenever possible, which was quite different from how the association had been previously run.

Keith has made a shift in the overall perception of the HOA. He spends countless hours helping his neighbors and serving his community. If a member is having a hardship and cannot get their lawn mowed, Keith has graciously mowed for them. He also has helped members with their irrigation issues along with troubleshooting the complicated HOA system. The board purchased bulletin boards to assist in keeping the less computer savvy members updated on events, and HOA updates, so all members can participate and be kept informed. And when it came time to install the bulletin boards, it was Keith who was out there digging holes to save association funds.

Keith's fellow board members have stated it is easy to serve on the board because of Keith and all he knows about the association and all he does for the community. Not only does Keith volunteer to serve the Idaho Creek community, but his wife, Brienne, does too. Brienne is now the sole member of the Resident Relations Committee. The Committee puts on a movie night, Easter Egg hunt, manages the bulletin board communication and handles social media.

Under Keith's direction, Idaho Creek HOA is a place where every member's opinion matters, there is transparency to the members of what decisions are being made, what funds are being spent on, and there is a positive attitude of inclusiveness. Board meetings are held around a large oval table where the board and members sit together. As president, Keith presides over the meetings in his usual, down-to-earth, caring, always respectful manner.

When Keith is not at work or serving the community, you can find him off-wheeling with his wife and daughter, Hayden, or just spending some family time together.

Written by *Susan Donovan-Smith*
Market Director, Colorado

RULE DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS III

Continuing with our series on Rule Development and Enforcement for Communication Associations, this month we delve into the development of Architectural Guidelines. Next time we will go into greater detail about Board Resolutions, so stay tuned!

Development of Architectural Guidelines

- Development of architectural guidelines should begin with a review of the governing documents to determine in what areas the board can allow a change. Usually, a community association's declaration, CC&Rs, or master deed provides for architectural changes.

It is in the community's best interests for a board to establish written architectural guidelines for two reasons:

- Written guidelines indicate to owners what types of changes will be allowed under normal circumstances.
- Written guidelines are a way to avoid claims of arbitrary or selective treatment of owners.

It is in the board's best interests to establish an architectural guidelines committee. A committee can concentrate its efforts and attention on this major task alone. It can also act as a buffer between the requesting owner and the board.

Written by **Mary Arnold, CMCA®, AMS®**
National Director of Training and Community Association Manager Success Group

6 Ways to Manage Parking for Visiting Holiday Relatives

Having family over for the holidays is an essential part of the holiday season. Of course, it is also one of the biggest challenges. For anyone going visiting, there is the necessity of travel. And for every holiday host, you have got more than a few logistics to juggle by yourself. Preparing the guest room, shopping for groceries and, inevitably, figuring out where everyone will park. Most of us have room for one, maybe two, visiting cars. But when many branches of the family come together, there is bound to be parking overflow which eventually packs the whole street with visiting relatives. This year, you can make extra room for family and keep your street safer to drive on by taking charge of your parking situation.

CLEAN THE GARAGE

Garages have a tendency to slowly fill with things that are not a parked car. Especially if you have a two-car garage and only use half of it for the household vehicle. If you have a whole parking space blocked out by garage junk, it is time to make room. Allowing even one relative to park in the garage creates a whole extra car of space and one less person parking on the street. Not to mention, your in-garage relative will appreciate the weather-sheltered spot.

DECIDE WHO GETS BLOCKED IN

Next, consider how you can use your driveway for maximum parking. Most driveways are deep enough for at least one car beyond the garage door, and sometimes you can squeeze in two compact cars end-to-end. A two-car-wide driveway is better for family parking. But someone is going to get blocked in. Instead of trying to avoid the block-in (or fighting about it later), decide ahead of time who will block who based on transportation plans. Anyone who is staying in your house should get the garage or inner-driveway space while anyone just "popping in" should take the outer spaces. Then you can plan on who leaves first based on where everyone is parked.

PRACTICE CURB PARKING

One of the biggest dangers of the holiday season in the suburbs is curb parking. Or more to the point, people who don't know how to park on the curb. Holiday curb parking is the leading reason why roads become dangerously narrow during this time of year, with vehicles parked on both sides of the road. And worse, parked more than a foot away from the curb itself. If you must park your relatives at the curb, encourage them to practice curb parking before arrival. And do a little practicing yourself. The closer everyone parks to the curb, the more space there will be to use the rest of the street safely. If you are good at curb parking, consider offering to "finish" the parking job for someone else.

LIMIT GUESTS TO YOUR CURB ONLY

And when your relatives are curb parking, it is important to respect the curbs of your neighbors. Chances are that neighbors will also have to park at their curb. If your family parking overflows beyond your own curb, then you're likely cramping the holiday parking of others. Remind your relatives to park carefully. If you have a large family, consider putting out something visible and easy to obey like traffic cones. Or lawn chairs, if you don't have traffic cones on-hand.

PICK UP RELATIVES FROM THE AIRPORT

Of course, the best way to handle a cramped parking situation is to forgo extra cars entirely. For any relatives who are flying in, try picking them up from the airport instead of having them rent a car. Not only does this reduce the number of cars in your driveway, but it is also a friendly way to start the holiday. Nearby families can use this solution too, by carpooling and sharing rides on the days you plan to spend together. Carpooling can also be used by visiting family to leave cars at hotels and come to your home in a single shared vehicle. And if someone needs an individual ride, consider calling an Uber.

ORGANIZE COMMUNITY PARKING

Finally, don't forget that if you live in an HOA, there may be community parking available. Pretty much no one uses the pool or the tennis courts in the dead of winter, but these areas do have nearby parking lots. Talk to your HOA about organizing community guest parking for family overflow. They may offer to let guests reserve a space or simply agree to let guests park in community lots. Work with your HOA to make sure that guest parking is cleared and how you will decide lot assignment. If the community lots are more than a block from your house, you may want to come pick up your distantly parked guests once they arrive and ferry them home for the holidays.

This holiday season, parking doesn't have to be a nightmare situation. If your house is usually overflowing with guest cars, or even if you want to reduce curbside parking problems, use these tricks. Every family member and holiday guest will find a place for their cars and you won't have to encroach on a neighbor's curb to accommodate everyone.



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