

# THE Board Beacon

"Exclusively for those who serve the community"



VOLUME 8, ISSUE 8

FEBRUARY 2005

## Inside This Issue

A \$308 OBLIGATION COULD BECOME A \$2000 PROBLEM . . . . .	1
AND THE SURVEY SAYS . . . . .	1
COMMUNITY WEBSITES . . . . .	2
WELCOME ABOARD . . . . .	2
COMMUNITY MAINTENANCE . . . . .	2
HCMS BOOK CLUB . . . . .	3
CUSTOMER SURVIVE . . . . .	3
ASSOCIA NEWS . . . . .	4



HOUSTON COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES  
18333 Egret Bay Blvd., Suite 445  
Houston, TX 77058

*The Board Beacon*  
is published quarterly by  
Houston Community  
Management Services  
for our associates.  
We welcome your questions,  
comments or story ideas.

Office: (281) 333-5173  
Toll Free: (800) 568-6807  
Fax: (281) 333-4475  
E-mail: [info@houcomm.com](mailto:info@houcomm.com)

EDITOR  
LEJEAN GRIFFITH  
ASSISTANT EDITOR  
CHRISTINA GRAY

## HOMEOWNER ASSESSMENTS

# A \$308 Obligation Could Become A \$2000 Problem

### The Homeowners Assessment is an Obligation...

Yes, a legal obligation, just like taxes and your mortgage payment. Many property owners do not realize the power their homeowner/civic associations hold over their property. Failure to pay the assessments in a timely manner is just as serious as failing to pay taxes or make your mortgage payment and the penalties can be just as severe. Actually placing the home ownership in jeopardy by failing to pay. To

protect the common good for all of the homeowners, the law gives the association very strong powers of collection, including foreclosure. This is a serious matter, particularly if a deputy or constable comes knocking at the door.

The Associations are established as a unique form of self-government, which is dependent on volunteers, such as the elected Board of Directors. In an effort to

**continues on page 3**

# And the Survey Says...

In our continuing effort to provide outstanding customer service to you, we will be implementing a random survey throughout the year. We will periodically, thru out the year, pick names from all Board of Directors and send a survey. Please keep in mind that not everyone will receive a survey this year. This survey will be

mailed directly to you and will ask a broad range of questions regarding all services that we provide. The survey will be confidential and only reviewed by officers of the company. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please feel free to contact **Aly Long** at 832-864-1229. •

---

---

---

---

---

## Community Websites

**H**ouston Community Management Services, an Associa company, offers community websites! Visit your community website or the sample site by going to [www.houcomm.com](http://www.houcomm.com), click on community websites. •



## WELCOME ABOARD

---

### NEW CLIENT COMMUNITIES

---

**Yacht Club Condominium Association**

**Pebble Brook Condo Owners Association**

**Chase Park HOA  
Hamilton Square**

**University Trace Condominiums**

**Morgan's Landing**

**Magnolia Estates  
Greatwood**

# Community Maintenance

Dear Board of Directors,

As you well know, we at Houston Community Management strive to provide you, our valuable clients, with the most beneficial and innovative services in the industry. On that note, we are proud to announce that we opened a maintenance department. The maintenance department will cater to your community's general maintenance needs. In an effort to provide you with the most efficient and cost effect service, we performed market research and discovered between \$45.00 to \$65.00 per hour. The maintenance department at Houston Community Management charges only \$35.00 per hour. We believe this commitment to service and fair pricing will allow us to be your full service Management Company. Please take a moment to review the list below and become familiar with a sample of the services we provide.

- Tree trimming
- Painting
- Fence repair and build outs
- Small plumbing
- Sheetrock repairs
- Power washing
- Parking lot striping
- Car stops, and much, much more.

Additionally we provide specific services just for our condominiums; that is door to door trash pickup and portering. These services are charged at a per door charge; and for the quality of service and convenience provided these charges are very reasonable. These services are a nice perk for condominium owners as it can be unpleasant to take trash all the way to the dumpsters; which are often in out of the way locations. Our experience has been that providing this service to your owners goes a long way in bolstering the relationship between board and membership.

We are anxious to discuss these exciting new services with you. Please call us with questions, to schedule work done or have a representative come talk to your board.

Respectfully,

Houston Community Management Services  
Maintenance Department

**OBLIGATION continued from cover**

ensure the quality and property values in your neighborhood, some enforcement of policy must be conducted concerning the payment of the assessments. As you are aware, the assessment pays for such things as electricity for street lights, security, park/recreational facilities, mowing and maintenance of common ground areas and esplanades, newsletters and insurance just to name a few. Also on the list are administrative functions, such as accounting, deed restriction notices, billing collection of the assessments.

The Association cannot ignore unpaid assessments. It would clearly be unfair to the hundreds of homeowners who pay this obligation each year on time. Non-payment of the assessment will undoubtedly cost the homeowner, a lot of money in the long run. When owners don't pay on time everyone is hurt. Homeowners are notified of the due date of assessment. Interest and a late fees are charged after the due date.

A collection charge plus tax is added, if still delinquent, after 2nd notice is sent. Any account delinquent after the 3rd month of delinquency will be referred to the association attorney for collections. The initial charge for an attorney referral can range from \$75 to \$150 plus additional court costs, judgement & filing fees depending on how long it takes and what measures are taken to resolve the matter.

The assessment is the owner's share of the common expenses. They have a duty to pay it and the Board of Directors of the Association has an obligation to the members to collect it. Many positive things stem from resident participation in the community. Timely assessment payments benefit neighbors, friends and family by sharing knowledge and concerns for neighborhood surroundings. Stay involved, contribute, enforcement the rules and pay your assessments on time to insure the survival of the association. •

# Customer Service

**H**CMC Customer Service Department has been up and running now for over six months.

During this time, the representatives working in Customer Service have gained a great deal of knowledge about the various sub-divisions, condos and townhomes, as well as knowledge about the various cities and counties. Our new Intranet service enables us to access information quicker and communicate with the managers more efficiently.

Our clients have been very receptive to actually talking with a live person and not just hearing a voice on an answering machine. Clients know if there is an emergency, it will be handled promptly. The response time for getting documents, recreation keys, and various forms into the homeowner's hands is much quicker than ever before. Our managers and assistants have gained more time to devote to dealing with Board of Directors, attorneys, and contractors, plus doing physical inspections of the properties.

The HCMS Customer Service Department would like all of our clients to know that we are available to help alleviate any confusion regarding violation letters, what the association can and cannot address, and to help homeowners understand when an improvement form is needed. If we are not sure of an answer, we will discuss the matter with the manager and communicate back to the homeowner what we find out.

HCMS Customer Service is constantly seeking ways to make improvements for our clients as well as our staff. •

# HCMS Book Club

## Drafting Rules: How Community Associations Maintain Peace & Harmony

BY GURDON H. BUCK

**N**othing can cause ill will within the community like unclear, unfocused rules. This report will not only help ensure that your rules are easily obeyed and enforceable, it will also provide input for rules you may have overlooked. Covers the legal basis for rule making, offers guidelines, and contains an Appendix with sample



community association rules that cover practically everything from rubbish to the swimming pool. Available [www.caionline.org/bookstore](http://www.caionline.org/bookstore) •



Associa is the nations leading manager of community associations. We are a group of community management companies across the nation. We share ideas in an effort to continually enhance and improve the services that we all supply to our clients. We try to use our volume of members to your advantage by seeking volume discounts on services provided on a national basis. We offer on-line newsletters and advice for our clients as well as a means of networking for our managers. We all strive to be the best the industry can offer. •

# Associa Newsletter Program

Your associations can now receive a professionally prepared COLOR newsletter with Associa<sup>SM</sup> Living advertisements at no additional cost above your local office cost for black and white copies!

Send us your unformatted, plain text content ... in 3-4 days, we will send you a color PDF (read-only) to review and approve. When you say you are ready, we will print it!

Whether the association has 50 or 1,050 units/lots/homes, Associa will ship the completed COLOR newsletters to the

local office for processing! The association will still be responsible for the costs of mailing the newsletter to owners. •

## dialUp Associa

Internet access for only \$9.00 a month! Sign up at [www.houcomm.com](http://www.houcomm.com), click on Shop at Associa Living, then click on dialUp Associa! •

**Associa<sup>SM</sup> ...**  
**The Leader in Community**  
**Association Management**

Phone: (281) 333-5173  
 Fax: (281) 333-4475  
 Web Site: [www.houcomm.com](http://www.houcomm.com)

Houston Community Management Services  
 18333 Egret Bay Blvd., Suite 445  
 Houston, TX 77058

**THE BOARD BEACON**

PRSR STD  
 US POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 WEBSTER, TX  
 PERMIT NO 48