



## **#303 HOA Homefront – New Year Resolutions, Part II – HOA Member**

By Kelly G. Richardson, Esq. CCAL

*Today's column is second in a four-part series, with possible resolutions for the HOA owner. Next week's installment will suggest ideas for managers.*

### **I, the HOA member, resolve to:**

#### **NUMBER ONE:**

- Follow the Golden Rule. "Treat others as you would like to be treated."

#### **MY ATTITUDE:**

- Not refer to the HOA or board as "they," since it is all "us." The directors are also members who pay assessments and give their time to benefit us all.
- Be neighborly, because shared ownership fails without cooperation.
- Assume our directors are doing their best as volunteers and give them the benefit of the doubt.
- Not first assume the board is incompetent or dishonest when I believe it is overspending.
- Avoid the "my home, my castle" attitude. We share the benefits of common interest ownership, which means we also agree to share the control of our property.
- Ask questions before making statements, criticizing, or even accusing.
- Acknowledge the board may have more information than me. This doesn't mean the board is right, but it does mean my opinion might not be fully informed.
- Take the long view of our association property, supporting growth of our capital reserves fund and maintaining our buildings.

#### **BE KNOWLEDGEABLE:**

- Read the information the HOA sends to me.
- Be familiar with the CC&Rs, bylaws, and rules. I will reduce confusion and disputes by understanding the use restrictions and rules.
- Read the association budget and reserve study. I will ask informed questions, particularly about deviations from budget.
- If I ask to review financial documents, I will not ask for "everything," and request only documents which I really need, acknowledging my manager is not a librarian.



#### HELP BOARD MEETINGS:

- Insist the board follow the Open Meeting Act, and only handle in closed session the limited items allowed by law. I will also help to contribute to orderly meetings.
- Review the posted agenda before attending board meetings.
- Organize my open forum remarks and accept that the board may not immediately have an answer or response to my questions or suggestions.
- I will use my open forum time to inform the board, not to argue with them, and after open forum I will not interrupt board deliberations.
- Encourage others attending board meetings to behave with decorum and respect, as we are all neighbors.

#### HELPING:

- Join a committee, helping share the load of operating our HOA.
- If I disagree with the board, I will first provide suggestions and information before criticizing.

#### COMMUNITY BUILDING:

- Find ways to enhance our community's image.
- Try to resolve disputes with a neighbor or the association before "going legal." Legal disputes can fracture relationships for years. Neighborhood resolution is almost always more effective than lawyer action and court orders.
- Participate in all member votes, even if only by mailing in my ballot.
- Join a Community Associations Institute chapter and suggest our HOA encourage directors to be educated members and hire credentialed managers.
- Frequently find opportunities to thank our directors, committees, and manager for their service to the community.
- Vote for directors who will have an attitude of service and do things the right way.

#### LAST:

- Follow the Golden Rule.