

Get to Know CAI National

By Thomas M. Skiba, CAE

The Long Island Chapter of the Community Associations Institute is one of 60 CAI chapters, and while the chapter provides a wealth of member benefits, your member benefits include everything our national organization has to offer as well. If you are not aware of these myriad benefits, you're not taking full advantage of your CAI membership.

With that in mind, here is a primer on your national organization—what we do, how we serve you and what and we accomplish on behalf of your associations, your professions and the more than 60 million Americans who make their homes in common-interest communities.

A Growing International Organization

Community Associations Institute (CAI) is an international membership organization dedicated to building better communities. With more than 33,000 members, CAI works in partnership with 60 chapters, including a chapter in South Africa, as well as with housing leaders in a number of other countries, including Australia, Canada, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

CAI provides information, education and resources to the homeowner volunteers who govern communities and the professionals who support them. CAI members include association board members and other homeowner leaders, community managers, association management firms and other CAI Business Partners who provide products and services to associations.

CAI National serves homeowners, community associations, association board members, community managers and other industry professionals by:

- Advancing excellence through seminars, workshops, conferences and education programs, most of which lead to professional designations for community managers and other industry professionals.
- Publishing the largest collection of resources available on community association management and governance, including website content, books, guides, *Common Ground* magazine and specialized newsletters.
- Advocating on behalf of common-interest communities and industry professionals before legislatures, regulatory bodies and the courts.
- Conducting research and serving as an international clearinghouse for information, innovations and best practices in community association development, governance and management.

Vision for Elevating Association Life

CAI believes homeowner and condominium associations should strive to exceed the expectations of their residents. We work toward this goal by identifying and meeting the evolving needs of the professionals and volunteers who serve associations, by being a trusted forum for the collaborative exchange of knowledge and information, and by helping our members learn, achieve and excel. CAI's mission is to inspire professionalism, effective leadership and responsible citizenship—ideals reflected in associations that are preferred places to call home.

Governance and Leadership

Board of Trustees. CAI is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees, including a president and president-elect, a minimum of four community management professionals, two community association volunteers and two business partners. Four at-large members are selected by a board-appointed nominating committee. No single member classification can be represented by more than seven members on the board.

Member Representation Groups (MRGs). CAI's primary member constituencies are represented by the Association of Professional Community Managers (APCM) Board, the Business Partners Council (BPC) and the Community Association Volunteers Committee (CAVC). MRGs give members in each constituency an active voice in CAI policy and a platform for making recommendations on services that are important to them. Members of each group are elected by their peers. In turn, they elect members to serve on the Board of Trustees.

CAI Value to Individual Members

- Chapter membership
- Education, products and services
 - Professional Management Development Program (PMDP) courses
 - Board member and homeowner education opportunities
 - Conferences, seminars and workshops at the national, state and local levels
 - *Common Ground* magazine
 - CAI Press—100+ educational publications
 - Specialized newsletters—association law, community management, community association volunteer leadership
- Professional credentials
- Public and members-only content and resources on www.caionline.org
- Networking and career-building opportunities
- Business-building opportunities—exhibiting, advertising, sponsorships, direct mail
- Personal relationships at the national and chapter levels

CAI Value to the Community Association Industry

- Providing legislative representation at the local, state and federal levels
- Encouraging fair and accurate press coverage

- Promoting the value of professional management
- Establishing best practices and industry guidelines
- Sponsoring industry research
- Enhancing industry-wide professionalism
- Inspiring volunteerism, effective leadership and responsible citizenship

New and Improved Website

Our website at www.caionline.org has undergone a complete transformation. New navigation makes it easier than ever to access the information you need, whether by interest (chapters, advocacy, learning center) or by your community association role (community managers, homeowner leaders or business partners). You'll find fly-out menus on the homepage that highlight featured news, featured tools, multimedia and industry data. Content blocks on the homepage provide easy, direct access to information on *Common Ground*™ magazine, advocacy, information about community associations, events, homeowner resources and CAI Press shopping. Importantly, the site provides optimum usability on all devices—from desktops and laptops to tablets and smartphones.

Education and Events

CAI is the international leader in the creation and development of education programs for community association managers, association board members and other community leaders. In the most recent fiscal year, close to 10,000 members took advantage of a national CAI education course, conference, seminar or other event.

- More than 150 annual Professional Management Development Program (PMDP) courses
 - M-100: The Essentials of Community Association Management
 - Six 200-level courses (five also offered online)
 - Eight 300-level courses, including , M-300: Ethics and the Community Manager, which is only offered online)
 - M-400: Contemporary Issues in Community Association Management
 - Professional Community Association Manager (PCAM) Case Study
- National Conference and Exposition, with various education tracks
- Community Association Law Seminar
- Large-Scale Managers Workshop
- CEO-MC Retreat (for management company executives)
- Webinars for management professionals and homeowner volunteer leaders

Designations and Credentials

CAI grants a number of professional designations, including Association Management Specialist (AMS), Professional Community Association Manager (PCAM), Accredited Association Management Company (AAMC), Reserve Specialist (RS), Large-Scale Manager (LSM) and Community Insurance and Risk Management Specialist (CIRMS). Designations give managers and other industry professionals opportunities for greater respect and recognition, career advancement and increased salary potential. CAI has awarded more than 2,500 PCAM designations, more than 7,300 AMS designations, about 270 RS

designations and 100-plus CIRMS designations. Almost 150 attorneys are fellows in CAI's College of Community Association Lawyers.

Government and Public Affairs

CAI members face several thousand pieces of state legislation annually. In many cases, this legislation is designed to control, regulate or micromanage community associations. CAI works to ensure that the voice of community associations is heard. We accomplish this through 36 state legislative action committees (LACs), which are supported by more than 400 volunteer advocates who work with the CAI staff to represent CAI members and actively participate in state legislative and regulatory processes on issues such as manager licensing, priority lien, environmental controls (e.g., clotheslines and solar panels), transfer fees, homeowner rights, and condominium and planned community acts.

- CAI and its federal LAC represent members on federal legislative and regulatory issues such as lending and mortgage financing issues, transfer fees, bulk video service contracts (e.g., cable television), HAM radio issues, bankruptcy reform, Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster reimbursement and flood insurance
- CAI's *amicus curiae* ("friend-of-the-court") program has been used to affect legal decisions and to establish pro-community association precedent in state appellate cases
- The online Advocacy Center enables members to track legislation in their states and to communicate directly with state and federal legislators

Common Ground Magazine and Newsletters

CAI periodicals are delivered directly to members' homes, businesses and inboxes, providing ideas and solutions to help members stay abreast of the latest issues and trends affecting community associations.

- *Common Ground*—bimonthly, full-color, award-winning magazine for all members (print and digital)
- *Community Manager*—bimonthly, award-winning newsletter for professional managers and management company executives (print and digital)
- *Fast Tracks*—monthly e-newsletter for all members
- *Law Reporter*—a monthly e-newsletter for all members
- *Minutes*—bimonthly e-newsletter for community association volunteer leaders
- *Copyright-Free Newsletter Articles*—quarterly content for community association publications
- *Business Partner Bulletin*—quarterly e-newsletter for CAI product and service providers

CAI Press

CAI's publishing division, CAI Press, is dedicated to publishing the very best resources available for community associations—the largest collection of books, guides and CDs that specifically address community association governance and management—written by experts who know the issues and know what members need to succeed. The bookstore offers 100-plus titles on a variety of topics, including policies and rules, management, leadership, legal issues, insurance, maintenance, building

community and finance. Members can browse the online bookstore by subject, category, best-sellers or new titles. Members get a 40 percent discount on CAI Press titles.

Communications and Media Relations

Media and public relations strategies are used to: (1) increase the visibility and standing of CAI; (2) promote the nature and value of community association living; (3) elevate the status of community association professionals and volunteer leaders, and (4) inspire more effective, harmonious communities. Toward these objectives, we:

- Disseminate news releases and other forms of publicity to promote CAI products and services and to better establish CAI (and our chapters) as the voice for the community association field
- Conduct media relations in support of CAI policies and positions, minimizing negative press and promoting positive CAI initiatives such as *Rights and Responsibilities for Better Communities* and the *Community Association Governance Guidelines*
- Develop communications materials members can use for their own outreach, including content in the Press Room, fact sheets, media statements, talking points and more
- Provide resources to educate homeowners, real estate agents, public officials and other stakeholders about CAI, the community association industry and the nature, benefits and responsibilities of common-interest community living

Opportunities for Business Partners

CAI provides a wide variety of ways service providers can increase their visibility and connect with potential clients. Business partners are encouraged to get involved in CAI at the national and chapter levels, serving on chapter boards and committees and being the experts called upon for presentations at national and local educational events. They also can reach CAI members by advertising in national and local publications, exhibiting at trade shows and conferences and sponsoring events, professional development courses, CAI Press catalogs and more.

To learn more about CAI National, visit www.caionline.org or call (888) 224-4321 (M-F, 9- 6 Eastern Time). Our customer service team will be happy to help you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas M. Skiba is the Chief Executive Officer of Community Associations Institute, headquartered in Falls Church, Virginia. Prior to joining CAI in 2002, he spent almost 17 years with KPMG Consulting, where he provided critical business advisory support to a wide variety of not-for-profit, higher education, and government organizations. He has extensive experience assisting organizations in strategic planning, business process reengineering, and technology selection/implementation.

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