

## HOA HOMEFRONT

# NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS FOR HOA MEMBERS

BY KELLY G. RICHARDSON

I, the HOA member, resolve to:

## Always:

1. Follow the Golden Rule. (paraphrase: "Treat others as you would like to be treated")

## My attitude:

2. Not refer to the HOA or board as "they," since it is all "us." The directors are also members who pay assessments and spend their time working to benefit us all.

3. Be neighborly, because shared ownership fails without cooperation.

4. Assume our directors are doing their best as volunteers, and give them the benefit of the doubt.

5. Not first assume the board is incompetent or dishonest when I believe it is overspending.

6. Avoid the "my home, my castle" attitude. We share the benefits of common interest ownership, which means we also agree to share control of our property.

7. Ask questions before making statements, criticizing, or even accusing others.

8. Acknowledge the board

may have more information than me. This doesn't mean the board is always right, but it does mean my opinion might not be fully informed.

9. Take the long view of our association property, supporting growth of our capital reserve fund and maintaining our buildings.

## Be knowledgeable:

10. Read the information the HOA sends to me.

11. Be familiar with the CC&Rs, bylaws, and rules. I will be a better neighbor by understanding the use restrictions and rules.

12. Read the association budget and reserve study. I will ask informed questions, particularly about deviations from budget.

13. 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:

14. Insist the board follow our transparency laws, and only handle in closed session the limited items allowed by law. I

will also help to contribute to orderly meetings.

15. Review the posted agenda before attending board meetings.

16. Organize my open forum remarks, and accept that the board may not immediately have answers or responses to my questions or suggestions

17. 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.

18. Encourage others attending board meetings to behave with decorum and respect, as we are all neighbors.

## Helping elsewhere:

19. Join a committee, helping share the load of operating our HOA.

20. If I disagree with the board, I will first provide suggestions and information before criticizing.

## Community building:

21. Find ways to enhance our community's image.

22. 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.

23. Participate in all member votes, even if only by mailing in my ballot.

24. Join a Community Associations Institute chapter, and suggest our HOA encourage directors also to be educated members and hire credentialed managers.

25. Frequently find opportunities to thank our directors, committees, and manager for their service to the community.

26. Vote for directors who demonstrate an attitude of service and commitment to do things the right way.

## Lastly:

27. Follow the Golden Rule.

Richardson, Esq. is a Fellow of the College of Community Association Lawyers and Partner of Richardson Ober DeNichilo LLP, a California law firm known for community association expertise. Submit questions to Kelly@rodllp.com. Past columns at [www.HOAHomefront.com](http://www.HOAHomefront.com).