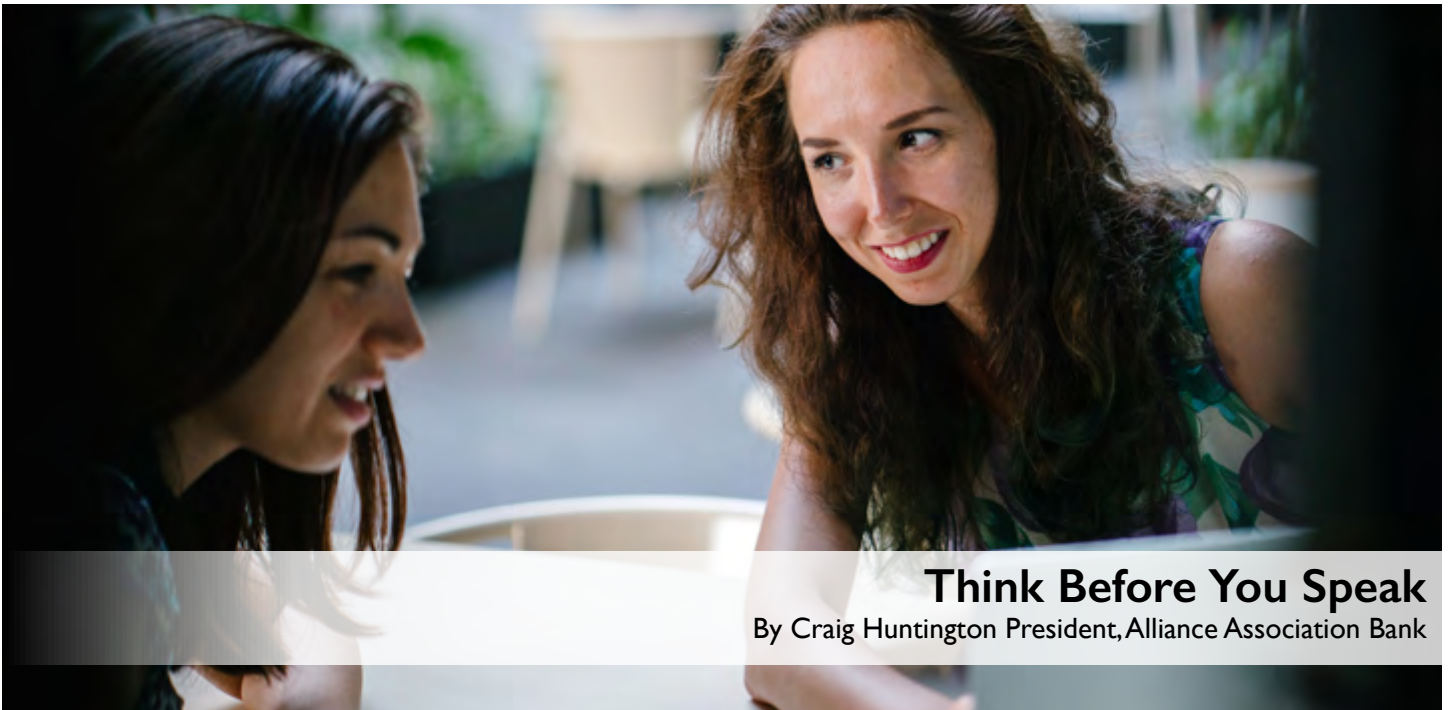


Community Connections



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Think Before You Speak

By Craig Huntington President, Alliance Association Bank

Think before you speak—we have all heard what we need to know about communication, and we’ve heard it dozens of times. Everyone writes about communication, even more talk about communication—but no one thinks about communication. Let me say this one more time, no one thinks about communication.

If you Google communication, you’ll return roughly 322 million pages—Google leadership and you return about half that—Google Brittney Spears and you drop down to 13.4 million pages. So clearly communication is a topic of much discussion. But the topic stops at conversation—it never moves to the next step.

So what is the next step? The next step is deliberate and continuous thought about how communication impacts our daily lives. If you take the time to think about communication, there is no doubt in my mind that there would exponential increases in your effectiveness as a manager, mother, husband, friend, co-worker, and manager.

We have all heard the buzz phrases of business communication—active listening, seek first to understand then to be understood, concern for impact, use I phrases, open-door policy, paradigm shift, energize, synergize, touch base, win-win, offline—the list goes on and on. The

ideas captured by these phrases are an important step to effective communication, but before you can actively lesson, you have to think about active listening, and before you can create a win-win situation, you have to think win-win.

The key to developing good communication skills is developing the habit to think about communication—to

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Business Partner to Manager Communication: Likes and Dislikes

By Rudy Thompson, Dorman Association Management

Prior to establishing a relationship with a management company, it is important for the business partner to confirm the proper point of contact within the management company and find out whom they should be communicating with. This is important because many management companies have specific processes and or policies in place for dealing with business partner vendors and how they want their managers and business partners to communicate. This process varies from management company to management company; for instance, some are very strict when it comes to business partners stopping by the office unannounced, whereas others are not.

At times it is nice to have drop-in visits at the office as they bring a positive uplifting attitude and oftentimes come bearing gifts, which is a nice break for the office

staff who spend much of their time dealing with stressful issues, this was really missed during COVID times. Although it is nice to have business partners stop by from time to time, it can also be very disruptive. The management companies are usually very busy and when a vendor stops by unannounced, it can disrupt the work flow of the office.

The manager and business partner relationship is very important, the business partner can make the manager look like a rock star or a complete failure. Therefore, effective communication between the two is key to a successful relationship.

Dorman Association Management enjoys the relationships we have established with our business partner vendors and look forward to a more exciting 2021. ♦



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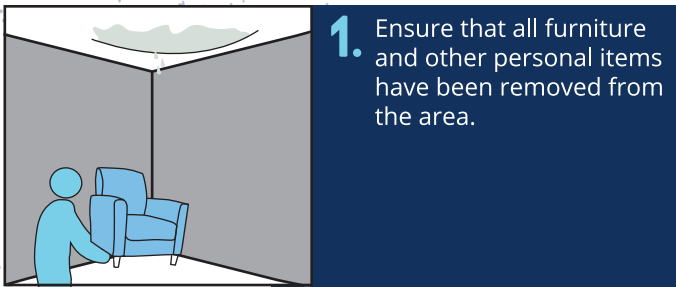
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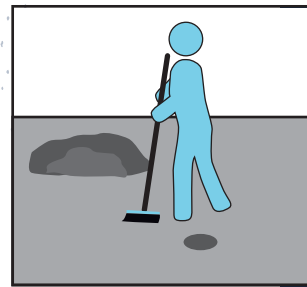
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EMERGENCY LEAK PROCEDURE

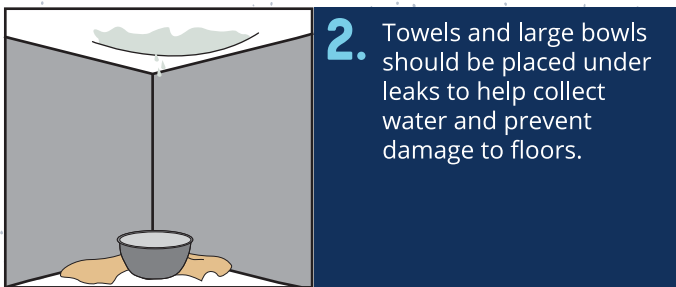
When you discover water damage, it is important to take action right away. Follow these steps to ensure minimal damage to your property.



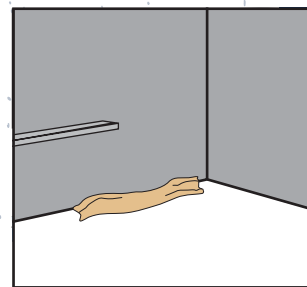
1. Ensure that all furniture and other personal items have been removed from the area.



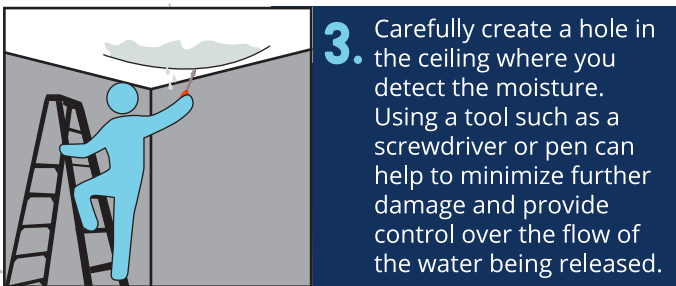
5. Keep deck areas and window ledges free of leaves and other debris that may lead to damming when it rains.



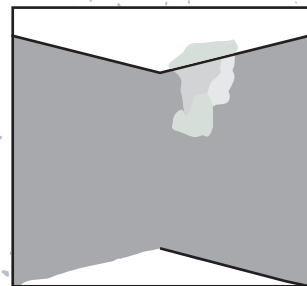
2. Towels and large bowls should be placed under leaks to help collect water and prevent damage to floors.



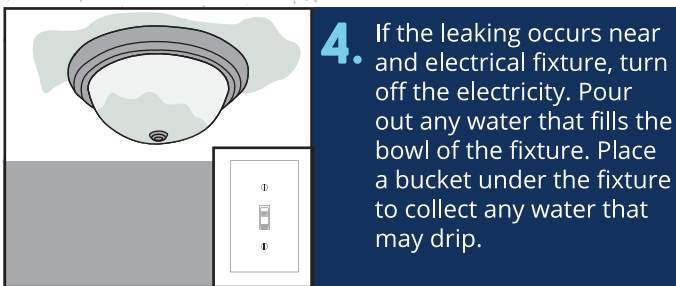
6. Place towels near windowsills and near walls by lifting the edges of the carpet to contain leaking water. Monitor and replace wet towels as necessary.



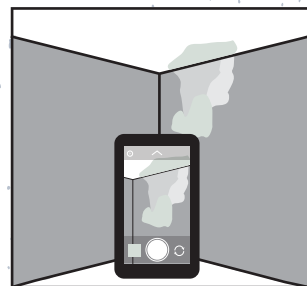
3. Carefully create a hole in the ceiling where you detect the moisture. Using a tool such as a screwdriver or pen can help to minimize further damage and provide control over the flow of the water being released.



7. While damaged plaster and loose drywall should be replaced, they are typically not considered to be a serious risk to your health.



4. If the leaking occurs near and electrical fixture, turn off the electricity. Pour out any water that fills the bowl of the fixture. Place a bucket under the fixture to collect any water that may drip.



8. Be sure to take photos or video of any damage you discover.



President's Message

By Tressa Bishop, USI Insurance Services LLC (formerly CB Insurance)

It is true what they say. Communication is key. Communication can make or break relationships and strengthen or tear apart a Chapter. Moving from a 100% virtual world in the first quarter of the year to a “hybrid” world where we are offering both in person and online communication for many Chapter events, there are bound to be some bumps along the road, but we’re committed to ensuring that each group receives a quality experience.

Being able to have a few outdoor events in May (Speed Networking put on by the Membership Committee) and July (24th Annual Tom Helgeson Golf Tournament) where our members can gather and communicate in person is a blessing that I personally took for granted just two years ago. It is wonderful to finally be together again on a more consistent basis.

The Board would like to invite our members to participate in our meetings throughout the year and communicate valuable input during the Member Forum portion of the meeting. The meetings are typically held the fourth Thursday of each month, with a few exceptions due to holidays later in the year. We’d love to see you there and hear from you directly on how we can improve our Chapter’s communication and drive results for our members. After all, you all are the reason we are here! Please reach out to Julie Massaro, our Chapter Executive Director, at info@caisoco.org for the upcoming meeting details.

Sincerely,
Tressa Bishop
Board President, 2021 CAI of Southern Colorado ♦



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think before you speak. A skilled businessperson and communicator recognizes the moments when they need to be conscientious and thoughtful about the language and style they use. During heated conversations or important discussions, you must be actively thinking about what you are saying and how you are saying it, and in a similar sense you must be an actively engaged listener, seeking clarity and understanding.

My staff is constantly amused by the banner attached to the headset of my phone—reading “seek understanding and clarity”—but I cannot answer the phone without thinking about the understanding and clarity that I seek in phone conversation I am about to have. On countless occasions, halfway through the conversation, the phrase has run through my mind, and it has given me the single moment to assess my communication—to think before I speak—and this makes the difference.

Every communication presentation and article is clichéd. The simple truth is, the secrets of communication are obvious. They're just difficult to practice and follow. Take a few moments each day, and try and practice good communication and develop the habits that will make a difference.

It does little good to talk about communication, one must actively think about communication. In the modern world of business we hear a great deal about strategic plan, mission statements, and setting objectives. These incredibly important parts of a successful organization and illustrate the underlying theme where the true value lies. The underlying theme is one of preparation and thought, and if you can apply it to communication, you will be successful in any endeavor.

About the Author

Craig Huntington is president emeritus of Alliance Association Bank (AAB). In his previous role as president, Mr. Huntington oversaw all aspects of service to homeowner associations and community management companies.

Starting in 2008, Mr. Huntington worked with the AAB team to provide superior service as well as the banking tools and innovative solutions that meet the needs of the community management industry.

For more than 30 years, Huntington has been active in the industry. Prior to joining Alliance Association Bank, he was president of Community Association Banc. His career in community management began in 1980, when he founded Huntington Property Services, a full-service property management company in Southern California.

A well-respected and distinguished industry and motivational speaker, Mr. Huntington has presented managerial, leadership and motivational presentations for the past 20 years. He has spoken at Community Associations Institute (CAI) conferences, management companies, executive retreats and strategic meetings in more than 25 states.

Mr. Huntington has served as president of the Channel Island Chapter of Community Associations Institute (CAI), and has been a member of the Board of Directors for the Nevada, Central Arizona and Utah CAI Chapters. He received his Bachelor of Science in Business from Oregon State University. ♦




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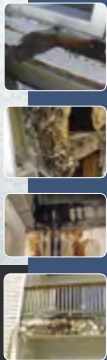
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Using Technology to Communicate with your Boards

By Heather Smith, The Warren Management Group

The past year has brought a variety of hurdles when it comes to communicating. We have learned to navigate the waters of online meetings; mastered the features of platforms such as Zoom and Go To Meeting; become experts at mass eblasts to address systematic violations; and become crafty with digital images, charts, and graphs as we try to convey valuable information through a screen. We watched as the world shut down. We were not given the luxury of putting business on hold because day-to-day needs did not slow. With creativity and the support of others in the industry we kept things afloat through a year of quarantine.

For many of us, this meant working from home with our children homeschooling in the next room. We took each day a little at a time and learned to roll with the punches, trading time in the afternoon to tutor on algebra for late-night sessions to catch up on email. Over time our work hours became skewed and the lines between work and home became blurred. Board members learned that they could likely catch us on our cell phone late in the evening and homeowners caught the few unblocked calls that slipped out from our homes and saved our cell phone numbers.

Now that many of us are returning to the office and striving for some resemblance of a pre-COVID workday, how do we reestablish our boundaries while still catering to the newfound flexibility that these online tools provide our homeowners?

Here are a few tips that I have found helpful:

1. Set Boundaries with Your Board

Speak openly with your Board about finding your work / life balance. Set rules for use of your cell phone and framework for when it is appropriate and necessary to contact you outside of business hours. Discuss the qualifiers of an emergency versus what is better emailed and added to the bottom of the list.

2. Redirect Homeowner Communication!

Send out a mass email reminding the membership of your office hours and what phone number or email to use for community business. State specifically that attempts to reach you by different means (ie. your cell phone or 20 calls to different folks around your office) will not accelerate the process.

3. Put it All Out There the First Time!

By taking the time to provide as much information as you can in the first round of correspondence, you can head off some of the questions that might later result in a back and forth. Learn from similar questions of the past and try to anticipate what questions may come next. A little extra time up-front may save you a great amount of time by avoiding back and forth later.

4. Request a Response!

If you need a reply to an email, put the words “Response Requested” in the subject of the email. Remember, managers are not the only ones seeing an increase in email communication. Call attention to what you need loud and clear in the subject.

5. Teach Them How to Use It!

Create a clear set of instructions for using your community website, client portal, or company app. By getting everyone onboard and comfortable with your online tools, you can streamline your communications.

Our new normal does look different than pre-COVID times, and we have all learned that thinking outside the box, to accommodate virtual meetings to conduct business is a vital part of moving forward while being mindful of everyone’s health and not so normal schedules.





Reflections on Serving Community Associations

By Joseph F. Smith, III, Esq., Burg Simpson Eldredge Hersh & Jardine, P.C.

“The first thing we do, let’s kill all the lawyers.”

-William Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part 2

Before I decided to go to law school, I interned at a small architecture and interior design firm that specialized in high-end, custom homes. It was an ideal job for an aspiring architect. However, for reasons I won’t bore you with here, I headed off to law school thinking that I would represent architects and engineers. In hindsight, I have to admit that I had no idea what representing architects and engineers would really involve. Fast forward to today, and I find myself in a career where, according to a 2013 Pew Research Center report, 34% of Americans believe lawyers contribute not very much or nothing at all to society, and only 18% of Americans said lawyers contribute a lot to society. In an earlier American Bar Association survey, 51% of respondents agreed that “we would be better off with fewer lawyers.” How’s that for public esteem?

Since 1999, I’ve worked with and represented hundreds of community associations faced with the daunting prospect of construction defect litigation. Reflecting back on these past 20+ years, I like to think that all of us who work with community associations (CAMs, management company staff, vendors and other product and service providers and, yes, even lawyers!) have a positive impact on the lives of the homeowners and residents we serve each and every day. I also think we have an obligation to communicate the value and impact of community associations regularly to anyone that will listen.

Luckily for us lawyers who work with community associations, the studies mentioned above looked at the legal profession as a whole as opposed to our specific practice and don’t appear to reflect the opinions members of community associations hold of the lawyers representing their associations. (I certainly hope that the owners and residents we work with have a higher opinion of the work we do.)

- Let me be clear. Do I believe the collective we contribute a lot to our communities and beyond? Absolutely. “Why?” you might ask. Well, let’s start by looking at some other, far more positive statistics about what we all do. According to CAI’s 2019-2020 U.S. National and State Statistical Review for Community Association Data: In 1970, there were 10,000 community associations nationwide. Today, there are an estimated 350,000 community associations in the U.S., serving 27 million housing units and 74 million residents.
- Between 9,000 and 11,000 new community associations are formed every year.
- There are 55,000 to 60,000 community association managers and 8,000 to 9,000 community association management companies.
- Management companies employ about 110,000 people.
- The real estate value of all community associations and their units exceeds \$2.25 trillion, which is approximately 17-19% of the value of all U.S. residential real estate.

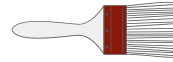
- The estimated annual operating revenues for all community associations in the U.S. is more than \$35 billion.
- 2.4 million Americans serve on a community association Board or committee. Those members provide 86.7 million hours of annual service worth an estimated \$2.4 billion.
- Annual assessments collected from homeowners total \$96 billion.
- Colorado has 10,300 Associations comprised of 2,311,000 residents, which makes it in tenth place with California and Florida in first and second places, respectively.
- CAI, which was formed in 1973, has more than 43,000 members.

I don't know about you, but those numbers shocked me. They tell me that the communities we assist, whether small or large, old or new, condo or homeowner association, represent much more than just isolated groups of people and homes with, at best, a local impact. Instead, the work we do has major ramifications, extending beyond the physical boundaries of any single community. We help our communities provide housing to almost a quarter of the U.S. population. The communities we serve contain nearly 20% of all housing units in the country. We help our communities contribute nearly \$100 billion to nation's economy—and that's just through annual assessments! Imagine what that revenue is when you add in vendor services, property taxes, utility expenses, and all the other costs that go into operating every single community. If we—and I do mean all of us—didn't show up for work every day with a smile on our faces, and didn't give 110% effort to the always-growing list of "to do's," where would our communities, and all the people who so heavily depend on these communities, be? Probably in pretty bad shape.

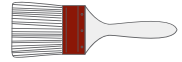
So, why do I do what I do? Because, when faced with the potentially catastrophic consequences of construction defects, homeowners and condominium associations have very little bargaining power compared to developers, builders and other construction professionals. Overworked and understaffed building departments can't possibly watch every nail be driven, or screw set, or shingle attached to ensure construction complies with the plans, specifications and building code. And Associations rarely have the resources to repair defects out of their own pockets or the know-how to begin prosecuting the legal claims they're entitled to in an effort to make those responsible for the defects pay for the proper repairs. Most importantly, I represent Associations and their owners because, like CAI, I feel compelled to help



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build better communities, and I like collaborating with community managers to help board member volunteers put their Associations in the position to provide the safer, properly-constructed homes and communities every common interest community homeowner deserves.

Do I miss being an architect? Sometimes. Do I wish there was a day on the horizon when construction defect lawsuits, and my involvement in these suits, were no longer necessary because developers and builders would put more emphasis on quality and stand behind their projects when mistakes happen? I sure do. When that day comes, I might just go to medical school to become an ER doctor! But in the meantime, I'll keep working with the communities I'm lucky enough to represent. It is important for me, and so many other folks who help common interest communities across the country, to remember we are fortunate to have careers that allow us to serve the greater good and help common interest communities across the country continue to be what they are: juggernauts of real estate and related services and financial worth for nearly one-third of the U.S. population.

About the Author

Joseph F. Smith, III, Esq., Burg Simpson Eldredge Hersh & Jardine, P.C. Burg Simpson helps community associations across the country maintain their financial stability by addressing defective construction or products in both new construction and major renovation projects. You can reach Joe at jsmith@burgsimpson.com. ♦



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Communication

By Diana Davis, BluSky Restoration Contractors, LLC

Keeping customers involved and informed on the progress of any project is a critical component to customer satisfaction.

In our efforts to ensure consistency in the customer experience we provide, we have standardized weekly customer communication through what we call our “Customer Progress Report.” Putting together this type of report ensures that we identify ALL Stake Holders in a project that need to be kept informed. There is nothing worse you can do to an association client than to have an affected owner ask the manager or Board member a question they cannot answer because you have not communicated properly. Without excellent communication we cannot survive.

I was asked to write an article about communication. In my eyes, excellent customer service is the best way to ensure our customers return to us when they have a need. Communication is the only way to do that. Clear, honest and timely communication. You do no favors by shading the truth or not letting the customer know when something is not going as planned.

Another part of clear and honest communication is following up after every project with

customers and requesting feedback on how things went. Sometimes, if a project did not go as planned, that may seem like something you don’t want to do and will require the customer to relive the negative steps in the process. However, giving a customer the opportunity to give honest feedback can only allow you and your company to grow, as well as your relationship with that customer. People want to be heard and to know that someone will listen. If they aren’t sharing feedback with you, they will likely share it with other people.

Merriam Webster defines communication this way: a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior. We have many ways to communicate these days, phone calls, emails, texts, Facebook, LinkedIn, to name a few. While we all may have our preferred methods, great communication likely occurs via all or most methods. And, more importantly, how your client prefers to communicate.

There is nothing more important to any business than honest, accurate, timely COMMUNICATION!



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2021 Event Calendar

(Dates Subject To Change)

- | | |
|---|--|
| Jan 12 Education Luncheon: January Jumpstart (VIRTUAL) | Sept 9CLACsic Golf Tournament |
| Feb 9Education Luncheon (VIRTUAL) | Sept 14Annual Meeting Luncheon |
| Mar 9Education Luncheon (VIRTUAL) | Oct 7Business Partners Fall Happy Hour |
| Mar 17New Member Breakfast (VIRTUAL) | Oct 12Education Luncheon |
| Apr 13Education Luncheon | Oct 13New Member Breakfast |
| Apr 17Board Leadership Development Workshop | Oct 16Board Leadership Development Workshop |
| May 11Education Luncheon | Oct 22Bowling Tournament |
| Jun 8Education Luncheon | Nov 9Education Luncheon |
| Jul 16Golf Tournament | Dec 14Year-End Celebration, Awards,
.....Install Officers & Charity Donation Event |
| Aug 10Education All Day: Law Day | |
| Aug 18-19 ..CAI National Conference – Las Vegas | |

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