

FCAP *Alive!*



Lisa Whitson

FLORIDA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION JOURNAL — THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF FCAP

As you read this column, take a look at where you are sitting. Are you safely tucked away in your home office or living room reading a copy of this magazine because you are newly elected to your HOA's board? Or perhaps you are flying to Fort Lauderdale to meet with a condominium association client to bid on their next building project. Maybe you have the digital version of the magazine pulled up at your desk during lunch.

Regardless of where you are and what format (paper or digital) you happen to be using, you are reading something no other state has the privilege of claiming—a statewide magazine completely devoted to you.

The *Florida Community Association Journal* is now the official trade publication of FCAP—Florida Community Association Professionals. As the community association industry grows across the state, coverage of issues and events will continue to be the focus in this magazine. Along with issues and events, members of FCAP will be profiled. Read how board members just like you are managing the challenges of reserve studies, increased assessments, and major renovation projects.

In order to stay informed of community association news, FCAP events, and member profiles, be sure to join FCAP. Membership in FCAP includes a host of benefits, one of them being a complimentary subscription to this magazine. Join today to ensure you don't miss a month of valuable information. FCAP membership information can be found at www.flcaj.com under the FCAP icon. You may also call (561) 277-8152 and join over the phone. It's easy and benefits begin immediately.

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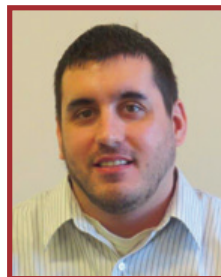
Lisa Whitson, FCAP Director

NEW MEMBERS

FCAP would like to welcome the following new members:

CFCAM

- Erich Sitko, CFCAM
- Matthew Bittihoffer, CFCAM



Matthew Bittihoffer, CFCAM



Erich Sitko, CFCAM

CASP-Designated

- Sherwin-Williams
- PeytonBolin, PL
- Bakalar & Associates, P.A.

FCAP LUNCHEON KEYNOTE ADDRESS (PART 3)

By Donna DiMaggio Berger, CASP-Designated Member

***Editor's note:** This is the third and final part of Donna Berger's keynote address she delivered on January 8, 2014, at the FCAP Conference. Parts one and two can be found in the March and April issues of FLCAJ respectively.*

At about the same time that positive change occurred in my own HOA, something amazing was happening in my professional life. I suddenly realized how important and terribly personal the work we do for communities really is. When I was asked years later what happened by a new partner of mine, I simply said, "I fell in love with my clients." Their battles became my battles, their challenges became my challenges, their failures became my regrets, and their successes became my proudest moments.

That evolution in feeling brought about the realization that it was time for my career to evolve. The rest, as most of you know, is history. What would you do if you had a dream and no fears? You might

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build a firm, an advocacy network, a campus dedicated to teaching volunteer directors and managers, and you would have fun doing it. You might hire talented people with whom you like to spend your days. You would undoubtedly make some mistakes, but you would learn from them and get better. You would live your life as best you could, knowing each day is a new opportunity to get it right or get it wrong.

Along those very lines, FCAP was the brainchild of the same folks who brought us our industry's most respected publication, the *Florida Community Association Journal* 28 years ago. They saw a need and an opportunity in Florida to raise the level of professionalism among managers, service providers, and volunteer directors, and they created a company to do just that. They have assembled an amazing curriculum and the program's outreach continues to grow each month.

We all need to ask ourselves, how many other great ideas are out there right now in this audience? Each of you is passionate about this industry and the community association lifestyle it supports. What would you create and what would you do if you had the time, money, and freedom to pursue your dreams? Not every problem in our industry has been solved yet so there is ample room for more innovations to fill those needs.

I saw on *The Show* materials that I would share some tips on life/work balance. To be truthful, I am still figuring out that balance myself. There have certainly been times where one area of my life demanded more attention than the others, and I threw myself into those issues fully until they were resolved. There is so much in life that we have no control over, but we can decide with whom we wish to share our lives both professionally and personally. One of the most important lessons I have learned is how vital it is to do business with people you love. That includes the people you call your partners and co-workers, the people whom you call your professional advisors as well as the people you call your clients. If you love what you do, love the people with whom you work, and love the people for whom you work and who work for you each day, the rest will all fall into place.

Well, my babies are all grown up now, and I am back home at Becker & Poliakoff where my association law practice first started when Ryan was still in diapers. Ryan is now in his last year at the University of Florida and is getting ready to attend law school in the fall. Lauren is in her freshman year at Washington University in St. Louis. They too have grown up in the community association industry, hearing about board meetings, reserves, quorums, and proxies, terms that would probably make many of their peers say "huh." They have seen their mom wearing fatigues and high-heel camo boots teaching educational classes to

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countless directors and managers, as well as attended Legislative Town Hall events where they were able to meet and listen to many Florida legislators discuss policy. They both interned at my law firm, working everywhere from the mail room to the marketing department and met many of my clients and colleagues. I like to think this industry gave both my children some real insight into not only what it means to run a successful community but what it means to build a successful life.

Finally, what were some surprises I've learned over the years? Well, getting back to that skylight replacement project from our very first condominium, we found out that the president who had such an unorthodox method of approving potential purchases had a similarly unorthodox method of selecting contractors. We also found out years later that our most charming neighbor in that community was actually a "cat burglar" who later made headlines. For more than two decades now, I have listened to even bigger surprises that our directors, managers, and association members stumble upon. There is one certainty in the community association industry and that is the fact that there will always be surprises both pleasant and unpleasant. How you choose to deal with them will define you.

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PeytonBolin, PL is based in Fort Lauderdale, FL. For more information, call (954) 316-1339 or visit www.peytonbolin.com. ■

** FCAP is a professional organization dedicated to raising the level of education, ability, and awareness of managers, vendors, and board members of Florida community associations.*

CASP-Designated is a professional designation offered to service provider members requiring advanced training, agreed-upon ethical standards, and commitment.

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