



# Neighborhood Insider

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## Answers from Amanda



**Q: What does CAAM® stand for and why would be want our community manager to be one?**

**A:** . The acronym CAAM® stands for Certified Arizona Association Manager. This is a certification for community managers acquired through a very specialized education program developed by and facilitated by the

Arizona Association of Community Managers or AACM. Unlike any other certification program for community managers, the CAAM® program includes mandatory classes on Ethics and Arizona State law related to both Homeowners' Associations and Condominium Associations.

When you see the CAAM® designation after one of our community manager's names, you can be sure that the manager has at least successfully completed the four required courses – Basics of Association Management (BAM), Ethics, Law and Finance. These core classes cover all areas of community management, including insurance, budget preparation, financial statements, reserves, board and membership meetings, Community Association law in Arizona, accounting methods,

taxes, collections, and audits, reviews and compilations. A CAAM® designate is also required to sign and uphold the AACM Professional Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, which can be found on the AACM website at [www.aacmonline.org](http://www.aacmonline.org).

In addition to the four core classes, a CAAM® must complete 27 hours of continuing education (CEUs) every three years. Nine of the 27 hours must be achieved by attending the annual mandatory Arizona Community Association law update class, which includes review and implementation procedures for any Community Association-related legislation passed in that year's legislative session. With that said, board members have the assurance that their manager, if CAAM® certified, is up to date on all of the Arizona State Statutes that apply to their community. There are many other elective courses in the CEU program, such as water use and conservation, cash management, landscape maintenance, developer transitions and community security. New continuing education courses are added each year to the program. All course curriculums are written by the AACM Education Committee, which utilizes experts in the applicable fields (CPAs, attorneys, arborists, reserve study companies, etc.) to assist with course material.

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## DID YOU KNOW:

### Newsletter Archives

Did you know that every issue of AAM's Neighborhood Insider newsletter is archived on our Web site? That's right. You never have to worry about missing another issue ever again! Just go to <http://www.aamaz.com/newsletters.php>, where you'll find interesting Association news and information dating all the way back to 2006.



### Training Webinars

Did you know AAM is now offering a webinar option for all board member training courses?

If you're a board member who lives in an outlying community, you'll be happy to know that rather than driving to our corporate headquarters in Phoenix, you can participate in our live training sessions via phone and computer. The next training session is scheduled for May. Watch this spot for more details!



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## SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: Dale Woods, Controller



Dale Woods believes homeowners deserve complete peace of mind when it comes to protecting their largest asset, their home. That's why AAM's Controller of Client Accounting Services does his job

with an acute sensitivity to this very issue.

"Our intent is to provide peace of mind in a complicated economy," he said. "We nurture long-term partnerships through responsiveness, communication, education and conservation of the resources that are essential to a resident's required lifestyle."

Woods has served as part of the Client Accounting Services Group since March 2008. The 40-member group, comprised of a team of accounting and legal experts, provides its Homeowner Association clients with accounting, financial reporting, cash management, budgeting, paralegal, disclosure and data management services. Woods assists AAM's Director of Finance in working with four department heads and three Controllers of Master Planned Communities.

Woods is a high-profile member of the team, and spends a considerable amount of time speaking with homeowners, as well as their boards, committee members and community managers. He also regularly attends monthly and annual board

meetings, finance committee meetings, budget planning sessions and reserve fund reviews. Additionally, he's a frequent participant in board member training classes related to accounting and financial reporting.

"Discussions can include anything you might imagine – from assessment billing to the cost of Mutt Mitts," Woods said. "Believe it or not, a large community can spend \$20,000 a year on that one item."

In his spare time, Woods and his wife, a registered nurse, enjoy taking in various cultural and outdoor activities throughout the state, as well as an occasional scuba trip to Baja and Hawaii. The Phoenix residents are the parents of grown children and two cats.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE: Eco-Entertaining

Spring has sprung, and you know what that means: it's time to gather the neighbors together for an outdoor party before the temperatures begin to sizzle. But before you plan your next get-together, why not do yourself and the environment a favor by considering these helpful tips to add a little "green" to the festivities.

### DIGITAL INVITES

Take advantage of programs like Evite and My Punchbowl to invite friends and family using the Internet rather than a printed invitation. Or, use the event application on Facebook and other social networking sites.

If technology isn't your thing, be sure to use recycled paper designs.

### TRANSPORTATION

Encourage guests to carpool. As the host or hostess, help guests who live in the same area to connect by creating a map showing the concentration of guests by neighborhood.

### FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Serve organic beverages, as well as appetizers made from organic ingredients. Even better, keep it local. Support local farmers by purchasing items at a farmers' market, if possible.

To serve the food, use real cutlery instead of plastic. If you don't own enough, borrow from friends or rent from a party supply service. Avoid plastic and paper plates by serving food on plates made from biodegradable materials, such as corn or bagasse, which comes from sugar cane fiber. Look for brands like Eco Products, NatureWorks, World Centric, Greenfeet, Branch Home, The Green Office and Re:Modern.

Other ideas include serving only finger foods, using washable, absorbent cloths for post-party clean up and serving drinks in biodegradable cups. For close friends, consider making the party BYOC or "Bring Your Own Cup" instead of buying something that takes energy to manufacture and leaves a carbon trail from shopping or shipping. Guests bring their own wine glass or mug, avoiding any confusion or any need for wine glass charms.

### DECORATING

For mood lighting, use soy candles, made from 100 percent soybeans, a renewable and sustainable resource. For an outdoor event, buy a set of solar yard lights and don't forget to install them prior to the party on a sunny day.

Use flowers from your own garden or the local farmers' market, or potted plants from home, to decorate. For a table cloth, use a pretty sheet you already have or a painter's cloth for a casual linen look.

### MUSIC AND FUN

Continue the green theme by playing music from artists who support environmental causes. To find musicians who support Mother Earth, read Grist's 15 green Musicians and Bands.

For fun, include a green activity as part of the entertainment. Have guests model their own eco-friendly fashions, show how to set up a compost pile or cook some of the party food using a solar oven.

Source: [www.greenlivingideas.com](http://www.greenlivingideas.com)



### Answers from Amanda continued

To date, AAM has 66 employees, including our managers, business development staff and management team members, who have completed the CAAM® program and who are participating in the CEU program. It is a requirement that all of our managers receive their CAAM® certification, as we not only consider it an investment in our team, but also as one of the many value-added services we provide to our boards and our communities.

**Amanda Shaw, President of AAM, LLC**