



# Neighborhood Insider

SEPTEMBER 2008 VOLUME III ISSUE IX

AN AAM PUBLICATION

## Answers from Amanda: **Complainant Name**



**Q:** There is some confusion among our Board members regarding Arizona laws A.R.S. § 33-1242 (for condominiums) and A.R.S. § 33-1803 (for planned communities). Could you explain this law in more detail?

**A:** What has happened as a result of A.R.S. 33-1242 and 33-1803, both of which became effective September 21, 2006, is

that you often hear managers telling homeowners who call to report a violation that the complaint can no longer be anonymous – in other words, the violation letter must contain the name of the person (usually a neighbor) who observed

and is reporting the violation. This point is correct, but there is more to the actual process than simply saying that the complaint or report of a violation cannot remain anonymous.

Let's look more closely at the statutes. First, the statutes require the Association to provide written notice of a violation before taking any action, even if a fine is not imposed. So even before a lawsuit, injunctive relief or self-help is utilized to correct a violation, the homeowner has to be told in writing that the violation exists.

After the written notice or violation letter is sent to the

*continued on back*



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## NEWS YOU CAN USE: Board Training Schedule

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend our upcoming Board Training sessions. You won't believe the tremendous amount of valuable industry information we manage to pack into each and every meeting!

**TOPIC:** Board Training: Reserve Studies, Financials and Budgets  
**DATE:** Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2008  
**TIME:** 6-8 p.m., refreshments will be served  
**PLACE:** AAM Corporate, 7740 N. 16th St., Ste. 300, Phoenix

**TOPIC:** New Board Member Training  
**DATE:** Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2008  
**TIME:** 6-8 p.m., refreshments will be served  
**PLACE:** Held concurrently at AAM's Corporate, East Valley and West Valley offices

**AAM Corporate Office:** 7740 N. 16th St., Ste. 300, Phoenix  
**East Valley Office:** 1311 W. Chandler Blvd., Ste. 130, Chandler  
**West Valley Office:** 14780 W. Mountain View Blvd., Ste. 111, Surprise

*Please RSVP to Tanya Salerno at [tsalerno@AAMAZ.com](mailto:tsalerno@AAMAZ.com) or 602-288-2694*

## SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: Customer Service



**Seated L to R:** Jerry Lionel, Sharon Hooks, Josh Libby, Vicki Sears  
**Standing L to R:** Anthony Fierros, Maria Gutierrez, Brittany Barton, Orsolya Enriquez-Ibarra, Benita Daniels, Monica Estrada

Vicki Sears, AAM's vice president of customer service, loves a good mystery. In fact, she said delivering quality customer service can often be as thrilling as piecing together a challenging puzzle or unraveling a whodunit story.

"Customer service can sometimes be equated with CSI (Crime Scene Investigation)!" said Sears. "A lot of investigation may have to go into resolving the issue. Keeping in constant communication with the homeowner as we go through the process of solving the issue is the key to success."

Sears and her nine-member department are responsible for a number of tasks related to answering homeowner's questions about billing. They assist homeowners who are making payment via online banking; explain collection policies; outline what must be done to remedy late payments and late fees; and keep homeowner billing account information current.

They also work with homeowners to develop payment agreements when the homeowner is having difficulty paying the assessments.

"Our services can help alleviate some stressful situations for homeowners who are having financial difficulties and wish to pay the association, but cannot do so in one lump sum," Sears said. "The homeowner is able to speak with a live person and feel certain that we are doing everything that we can to assist them. In a world that relies so much on computers and the Internet, the human contact remains important to the Customer Service Department at AAM."

Now *that's* good customer service!

## DID YOU KNOW: Non-Chemical Weed Control

Did you know that weeds can be controlled by a number of non-chemical alternatives – and no, we're not talking about the tedious, back-breaking activity of pulling them by hand!

A number of organic gardening catalogs sell vinegar-based herbicides, usually with soap and/or lemon juice added for extra sticking and penetrating power. You can also make your own, using the recipe below. In a pinch, plain supermarket vinegar, either distilled or cider, effectively kills many troublesome weeds, including spurge.

**Try this herbicide recipe that comes straight from the kitchen:**  
**1 tablespoon dishwashing soap**  
**1/4 cup salt**  
**1 quart vinegar**



Mix all ingredients together and spray on weeds.

You can also spray unwanted plants with rubbing alcohol. Try this solution: 2 tablespoons rubbing alcohol (use more for really tough weeds) 1 quart water.

Regardless of the ingredients, apply the potion with a spray bottle and coat the plants thoroughly. Weed-killing works best on hot, sunny, wind-free days.

*Source: Sunset Western Garden Book*

### **Answers from Amanda continued**

homeowner, the homeowner has 10 business days from the date of notice to respond. This is when the following information must be shared, if it was not in the initial letter or "courtesy notice":

1. The provision of the documents that has been purportedly violated;
2. The date of the violation or the date the violation was observed;
3. The first and last name of the person or persons who observed the violation; and
4. A description of the process the homeowner must follow to contest the notice.

The point of clarification lies in the fact that this information does not have to be in the initial notice (or courtesy notice in our case). If the above information is not in the first notice or courtesy notice, the Association must wait until the 10 days have passed, during which time the homeowner may send in

a certified letter before any enforcement action can be taken. Note that the Association (AAM on its behalf) has 10 business days to respond to the homeowner's response and must be sure that the above information is included. But, also note that the Association's response to the homeowner does not have to be sent via certified mail.

In theory, if a homeowner does call in or e-mail us with a complaint regarding a neighbor, a courtesy notice could be sent to the neighbor without mentioning the person's name who observed the violation. However, there is the outside chance the neighbor will ask for the person's name via a certified letter within the allowed 10-day time frame. So a manager must mention this to the homeowner who calls to report a violation, given that his or her name may have to be shared at some point (if not initially).

**Amanda Shaw, President of AAM**