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## **CAI president's message: Desire to create "community"**

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Building a sense of community in common interest developments has been a long sought after goal for community associations throughout the country. Nena Groskind in her Condo Media cover story Cooperation, Commitment, Communication & Concern: Building Blocks for a Strong Community outlines a number of common sense and proven strategies to help associations achieve that sometimes allusive sense of community.

As I reflect on the tips and techniques offered in the story, I am struck by the many similarities community associations and the CAI New England chapter share in their desire to create and challenges in achieving "community".

### **Cooperation**

Like community associations, volunteer leaders are responsible for the operation and management of CAI and the New England chapter. cooperation among and between board members, committee chairs and committee members is essential in achieving the common goals and objectives of the chapter as determined by its members. Through the cooperative effort and commitment of hundreds of volunteers throughout the chapter states of Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, countless programs and resources are provided and available to the thousands of New England community associations.

### **Commitment**

A commitment to the CAI New England chapter strategic plan has provided a strong foundation on which volunteer leaders continue to build. The year long strategic planning process undertaken in 2006 incorporated the feedback of members from every membership category and from every chapter state and lead to the adoption of a 3-5 year plan in late fall of 2006 and the implementation of that plan in January 2007. Having communicated with members through surveys, phone interviews and personal meetings, the plan addresses the most important needs of members and provides those benefits and services identified and requested by members.

### **Communication**

While communication helped to establish a sound direction for the chapter, ongoing communication remains critical to its ongoing success. Communicating with members on a regular basis through Condo Media magazine, the chapter website [www.caine.org](http://www.caine.org) and at local programs keeps members informed about industry and CAI issues while keeping chapter leaders apprised of member concerns and needs.

### **Concern**

It is the active involvement of so many volunteers truly concerned about the issues of common interest communities and their members that maintains the CAI "community". Not unlike community association volunteers, CAI volunteers find the same challenge of time - most notably the lack of it.

Volunteer organizations must find ways in which to successfully utilize the time available to accomplish the goals.

I welcome the opportunity to continue to work with so many volunteers and building the CAI community in this coming New Year and wish you all prosperous 2008.

Erik Simard is the 2007 CAI New England Chapter president, Wellesley, Mass.

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