

FROM THE PRESIDENT

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“If there were no thunder, men would have little fear of lightning.” -Jules Verne.

As a community association attorney, I do a lot of driving. To and from board meetings, court hearings, site inspections, and, of course, CAI events. A few years ago, I started listening to podcasts to get away from my thoughts and help pass the time. I listen to a few different podcasts, some about sports, some about music, and some about random things (including both of our chapter podcasts – *Community Matters* and *Whine on Wednesdays*). But by far my favorite podcast is Malcolm Gladwell’s *Revisionist History*. In Gladwell’s own words, *Revisionist History* is a reexamination of something from the past – an event, a person, or an idea - that is overlooked and/or misunderstood. Not so coincidentally, Gladwell is also my favorite author, so when I was thinking about doing a column about how education is such an important part of our chapter, I naturally wanted to tie it in to one of my favorite “Gladwell-isms” – the 10,000 hour rule.

Gladwell first discussed the 10,000 hour rule in his book *Outliers*, and although it is more complicated than this, essentially the rule states that achieving world-class expertise in any skill is, to a large extent, due to an enormous amount of practice. Over 10,000 hours of practice, to be exact. From *Outliers*:

“Achievement is talent plus preparation. The problem with

this view is that the closer psychologists look at the careers of the gifted, the smaller the role innate talent seems to play and the bigger role preparation seems to play.”

“The idea that excellence at performing a complex task requires a critical minimum level of practice surfaces again and again in studies of expertise. In fact, researchers have settled on what they believe is the magic number for true expertise: 10,000 hours.”

Quoting neurologist Daniel Levitin, “In study after study, of composers, basketball players, fiction writers, ice skaters, concert pianists, chess players, master criminals, and what have you, this number [10,000 hours] comes up again and again.”

Gladwell uses The Beatles as an example to illustrate the 10,000 hour rule. The Beatles started playing together in Liverpool in 1957, seven years prior to the “British Invasion” and ten years before their greatest achievements – *Sgt. Pepper’s* and the *White Album*. But starting out they spent countless hours in Hamburg, Germany, playing little clubs for seven (not eight) days a week. Whereas in Liverpool they would only do infrequent one-hour sessions, in Hamburg they played for hours and hours at a time. Gladwell estimates that from mid-1960 to 1962, The Beatles performed 270

nights. By 1964 when they had their first success, they had performed live approximately 1,200 times.

So what does the 10,000 hour rule have to do with our chapter, our members, and, most importantly our community associations? Well, for one thing it means that we cannot expect to be experts at governing and managing our community associations without the requisite practice – putting in the hours as one might say. That goes not only for volunteer association board members, but also for community managers, and other vendors and professionals (yes, even attorneys). I’ve been representing community associations for over fifteen years now and I still learn something new all the time. Sometimes that knowledge comes from reading a newly enacted law or published decision, but more often it comes from assisting one of the associations I represent deal with a unique problem.

So, given that how much time it takes for all of us to log the requisite practice hours to gain a certain level of expertise, education becomes an essential part of the “job” for any board member or community manager. That’s where the chapter comes in. Lest we forget, the chapter’s mission statement is literally to help build better communities. “The Keystone Chapter strengthens our members by providing education, information,

and advocacy that are central to managing and governing responsible, exceptional community associations."

I'm proud to say that our chapter is offering forty-two (42!) hours of continuing education for board members and community managers this year. And that, of course, does not include additional offerings from CAI National. Over the course of any given year, we offer board member training, two separate manager symposia, numerous sessions at our annual conference and mini-trade shows, not to mention our popular legal and legislative updates. All towards the goal of building better communities by building better, and more educated, board members and community managers. To quote Gladwell again, "Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing that makes you good." I hope you will take advantage of one of our upcoming education sessions and continue to "put in the hours." After all, practice makes perfect.

So that's it for this month. Thank you all for reading and thank you all for being members of the Keystone chapter. Here's to Malcolm Gladwell – please everyone go listen to *Revisionist History* or read one of Gladwell's books (I love them all, but *Blink* is probably my favorite). Here's to Damon Lindeloff, Chris Cornell, Matt Cameron, and Stone Gossard. Thanks as always to the Oxford comma. And please join me next time for my final President's column, when I discuss sleeping long and gaining weight.



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