

A collection of symbolic objects is arranged on the left side of the page. At the top left is a portion of a chessboard with several pieces. Below it is a red ribbon with a circular emblem, and a blue ribbon with a similar emblem. A silver star-shaped medal with a central emblem is positioned below the ribbons. A pair of glasses with thin frames and a red-tipped pen are also visible. At the bottom left is a circular compass.

# Rules of Engagement

For Homeowner Rights  
Activists

Copyright © 2006 Citizens for Constitutional Local Government  
George K. Staropoli



# 1. Guidelines

- ◆ Your issues must be based on fundamental principles
- ◆ Keep to the issues.
- ◆ Publicize the issues.
- ◆ Confront and expose the myths used against homeowners by special interest groups.



## 2. Quotes

- ◆ *We will continue to provoke until they respond and change the law ... Gandhi*
- ◆ *We must make the injustice visible ... Gandhi*
- ◆ They are defending the defenseless  
(anonymous)



## 3. Goals & Objectives

- ◆ You must establish the goals and objectives to be achieved, and keep those in mind as you develop a strategy and tactics to accomplish them.
- ◆ **Where are you now and where do you want to go?**



## 4. Watch the Issues

- ◆ Do not allow any CAI or special interest propaganda to go unchallenged. To do so gives their statements the appearance of truth. Get our position out. **Use their own words in your arguments.**
- ◆ Be careful of answering a question that implies your acceptance of certain "facts."



## 4. Watch . . . cont'd

- ◆ **Every time advocates are called on to compromise because each side has rights, beware.**
- ◆ Do not fall for this argument when none of the serious reforms -- such as foreclosure, due process, enforcement -- are not part of the special interest "handout."
- ◆ I've refused to accept such premises and have asked that our issues be included with the "peace offering" -- those issues open for discussion.



## 5. Stay focused

- ◆ Be careful of the challenge to advocates: **Let's hear your solutions!** Here again, the focus is on the day-to-day operating problems of HOAs, and not on the broader issues that are serious reforms aimed to correct the injustice.
- ◆ The Significant Seven, those 7 AZ bills that I've mentioned as meaningful, is an example of staying focused.
- ◆ **CAI loves to get everyone focused on the trees so they will not notice the ugly forest.**



## 6. The Legislators

- ◆ Do not alienate the legislators, they are "the only game in town."
- ◆ However, do not fear taking a firm stand on principles, standing fast to those principles, and be firm in your criticism.
- ◆ If you appear to be wishy-washy in what you want or believe in, you give the appearance of not being sure of your position and will be torn apart.





## 7. Working with HOA bills

- ◆ Many times the choice to support a particular bill is not clear. You must decide on whether overall the bill supports or does not support your position.
- ◆ I've opposed bills with many good features because a very important provision was included that violated my objectives for reform -- HB2154 is a good example when it removed the need to tell the truth to the public regarding the loss of their homestead exemption.




## 8. Power & Activism

- ◆ Advocacy, to be effective, must reach those in power -- those who have the ability to do what we want, or not to do what we don't want, and those who influence those in power -- the media and the public at large.
- ◆ Talking among ourselves is important, but unless we influence those with power -- and that's called **activism** and not advocacy -- nothing will change.



## 9. Showing your power

- ◆ **It's all about politics and power, where being right and just is only the starting point.**
- ◆ **Knowledge is not power. It's the application of that knowledge that's power.**



***If you know the enemy and  
know yourself, you need not  
fear the result of a hundred  
battles***

*The Art of War*, Sun Tzu, James Clavell translation