



**By Shannon Junior**

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# Learning Can Be Fun


Who would have guessed that Community Associations Institute (CAI) education could be so much fun? If you've ever been to the Homestead in Hot Springs, Va., you know that it is a beautiful mountain resort with three of the world's finest golf courses, a pampering spa and endless outdoor activities. It offers the epitome of luxury with the charm of old Southern hospitality. If you have not yet been there, then this is the year to check it out. From July 29-31, the Homestead will be the location for the

bond in a place that was conducive to relaxation and fun. Educationally, the aim was to provide courses that were advanced over the chapter level and were tailored particularly for Virginia managers and Virginia law. The first VLR was held at The Boars Head Inn in Charlottesville and proved that both managers and business partners had a need and an immediate love for the event. Last year, the event moved to The Homestead and was supported by all of the CAI chapters that serve Virginia. This year promises to be the biggest and

went on a fairly easy hike along a rocky riverbed to view cascading waterfalls and then learned with amazement that skeet shooting is not nearly as hard as it looks. If you prefer to do less and relax more, then you could spend the afternoon indulging at the spa or lounging by the pool.

The VLR officially kicks off Friday with the Welcome Reception that evening. The reception boasts delectable heavy hors d'oeuvres, fun networking and live entertainment. Saturday is the "meat" of the event, with the bulk of the educational sessions and the Legal and Legislative Update. Business partners have the opportunity to exhibit during the day Saturday so that all attending can meet them if they have not yet had the chance. Saturday evening always holds a wonderful dinner reception with cocktail hour, live entertainment and a menu only a James Beard award winner could produce. Then, it's rise and shine for round two of the educational sessions, which continue Sunday. The event comes to a close just before lunch. By the time the weekend is over, you will have earned eight hours of continuing education credits toward CAI manager designations without even realizing it.

I can't say enough good things about the VLR or The Homestead. The event offers advanced education on the state level at a very reasonable cost. And networking with other industry professionals for three days in a beautiful setting with no shortage of fun activities, great food and a few cocktails is an opportunity that you just don't get at a trade show or committee meeting. The resort itself is absolutely charming. The breakfast buffet is an event in itself and the nostalgia of the traditional afternoon tea is a lost art.

For more information on the Virginia Leadership Retreat, call 757-558-8128 or visit the VLR Facebook page. 



2011 Virginia Leadership Retreat (VLR). The VLR is a unique opportunity for manager members to earn continuing education credits while enjoying all of the amenities that this historical resort has to offer. It is also a great chance for CAI business partners to network with managers and industry professionals in a relaxed environment throughout the course of the event.

Kim Niesel, the marketing director for Solitude Lake Management, is the committee chairperson for the VLR and one of the event's founders. Her vision was to provide a setting where managers, management company executives and business partner members could meet, learn, network and

best event yet. The committee for the event is comprised of members of the Southeastern Virginia, the Central Virginia and the Washington Metropolitan chapters and each of the chapter's executive directors.

If you choose to arrive Thursday, you can take advantage of an impressive array of recreational activities throughout the afternoon and in the morning Friday. One of the most popular activities is the golf tournament on the Homestead's Old Golf Course, which has the distinction of having the nation's oldest tee still in continuous use. Other activities include fly-fishing, canoeing, horseback riding, tennis, paintball, hiking, biking and a gun club. Last year, I