

GUILT by ASSOCIATION

Matthew Jaster, Senior Editor

The definition is pretty straightforward: An association is an organization of persons having a common interest. Basically, it's a group that shares a purpose or mission that exists for the mutual advancement of its members.

The American Gear Manufacturers Association (AGMA) was founded in 1916 to assist in developing gear standards. Today, AGMA includes 495+ of the world's top gearing companies from across more than 30 nations. As we prepare to roam the halls of another Gear Expo, it's important to stop by the AGMA booth and thank those involved in the day-to-day activities for making the gear industry what it is today.

Why are we getting sentimental about AGMA, you may ask? Well it's simple really. We interview and talk with AGMA members on a daily basis. We hear stories about AGMA meetings where goals are actually accomplished, standards are updated and new technologies are examined that will benefit members.

Associations don't always run so smoothly.

My mother was a president of a school association once where the parents were much more dramatic and overbearing than their children. There's a reason homeowner association (HOA) bylaws can be found scattered across the Internet: Many of these laws can be labeled ridiculous, bordering on insane.

Some examples:

A man in Florida was taken to court by his HOA for parking his pick-up truck *in his own driveway*. Perhaps, it was not washed properly. Maybe it had one too many bumper stickers or window decals. It's possible that the HOA just didn't like the make, model and color of the truck. They took action.

A woman in Texas was once fined because the fence around her backyard was an *inch* higher than HOA regulations. You know the end is nigh when a neighbor is standing just outside your yard with a beer in one hand and a tape measure in the other.

Some HOAs flat out ban lemonade stands in the summer. Can you imagine an HOA president walking down the street in his dad socks, clipboard in hand, telling young Scott and Amy they need to shut down immediately?

So much for the American Dream.

I write this after recently moving to a neighborhood with its own 44-page document of bylaws. It's mostly, standard suburban fare: They want the yard nice, tidy and treated organically. No savage or wild animals can be kept in the house. No RVs are permitted on the front lawn. Basketball hoops can't be eye sores. Same goes for the mailbox.


But I hear about power-hungry HOA stories all the time. I hear about school association presidents that attempt to out Trump, Trump. I've been told stories about someone bringing an idea to an association meeting only to end up in tears after being mocked and ridiculed by the group that allegedly "shares a common purpose."

We're lucky to have AGMA. They are a great resource for those new and old to the gear industry. In the years we've covered gear manufacturing, we've never heard anything ridiculous or absurd outside of a disagreement or two about certain technologies — and an argument or disagreement isn't always a bad thing when you're dealing with highly-critical industrial applications.

It's important to get involved in AGMA activities as much as possible.

And it wouldn't hurt to stop by the AGMA booth during Gear Expo, hug an employee or simply say "Thank you."

They don't care what kind of truck you drive, how tall your fence is or if your kids want to make some cash at the lemonade stand.

They just want the gear industry to keep moving forward — one technology at a time. 

www.agma.org/documents/2017membershipapp.pdf

