

May 2019 President's Message



May brought our last Board meeting of the year, as well as our annual membership meeting. Hard to believe my term as President is winding down, and this is the 11th edition of my monthly President's Message! While I have truly enjoyed my time in Chapter leadership, I am looking forward to more spare time to pursue my barrel racing! (Above is a photo of *Usher's* winning run at the April Spring Fling Futurity in Salkum, WA.)

International Awards

It was a pleasant surprise when Jade Meador, IRWA Director of Events, recently notified me that our Chapter is a finalist for the award category *Gene L. Land - Highest Numerical Gain for Membership*. This is the second year in a row, we have been a finalist, and last year we won this award for growth in 2017, with 21 new members!

As you may recall in my January message, I predicted our current growth rate could garner another award. This year's award is based on gain for the calendar year 2018, which saw a significant increase of 91 new members joining Chapter 4. Forty-seven (47) joined during our current fiscal year beginning July 1, 2018, and the remaining 44 during the previous fiscal year.

The other two Gene L. Land award finalists for highest numerical gain in membership are Chapter 63, Region 8, Ottawa, ON, and Chapter 83, South Africa. The winner will be announced at the Awards Luncheon at the IRWA Conference on June 10 in Portland, OR. This makes the fifth award, which our Chapter and/or its members have been nominated. The other four categories are:

1. Chapter 4 for [*Chapter of the Year*](#)
2. Chapter 4 for [*Website of the Year*](#)
3. Miller Nash Graham & Dunn LLP for [*Employer of the Year \(less than 20 employees\)*](#)
4. Cyndi Whelpley, SR/WA for [*Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Award*](#)

It is truly an honor to be a finalist in so many categories. Good luck and congratulations to all the finalists. If you are going to the conference, please join us at the luncheon to find out the results and celebrate the winners (Melinda Burkhart and I have a little something planned). A special thanks to all our new members for making this award possible!

IRWA News

Staff Changes

This month there have been some staffing changes at IRWA headquarters (HQ), both expected and unexpected. First, the IRWA Board of Directors were notified on May 2, 2019 that Mark Rieck, CEO, was terminated from employment, and that Daniel Stekol Sr. VP of International Relations will immediately assume responsibility for HQ operations reporting directly to the International Executive Committee (IEC) until a new CEO is hired. On May 9, 2019, IRWA provided notification to the general membership by email. No further information is available at this time.

The second change is that Rakhshan Mazarei, IRWA Controller/Personnel Manager, will immediately assume responsibility for HQ financial matters, also reporting directly to the IEC, until a decision can be reached about replacing Fred Nasri, who is retiring May 15, 2019.

Due to recent changes, you may experience delays when contacting staff at HQ over the next few weeks. Please be patient, during this transition period.

IRWA Board of Directors Meeting

In preparation for the upcoming IRWA Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting on June 12, 2019, IRWA has scheduled a video conference May 16, 2019 at 9 AM with the International Governing Council (IGC) to discuss agenda items. All members are welcome to attend the annual BOD meeting, and I would encourage each of you to attend and get engaged in the business of YOUR association. The BOD will also be voting on:

- the election of the International Executive Committee Officers;
- a proposed amendment of International bylaws to allow for corporate membership discounts;
- the proposed 2019-20 budget

As I did in my first President's message last July, in June, I will provide a recap of the Annual BOD meeting. Stay tuned for my final and twelfth edition next month!

May Meeting Recap

Program

May 8th served as our annual Chapter Meeting in which the election of Officers occurs. This was also a makeup of our annual membership drive, where members are encouraged to bring a potential new member guest to attend free. I had the opportunity to speak with one of our seven guests who expressed interest in becoming a member, who I promptly emailed a membership application! This meeting is traditionally held in February, with a program related to professional networking, but was cancelled due to snow. I want to thank MNGD for generously agreeing to reschedule and host in May, as well as Tara O'Hanlon, Jackee Walker and Matt Hansen, who lead in interesting discussion on the impacts of special benefits and project influence on an acquisition.

Thank you to our Program Chair, Jesse Ray, SR/WA for a variety of program topics this year, and coming through on short notice to replace scheduled speakers in January and April to ensure members were not without a program!

Professional Development

Current Professional Development Chair (PDC) Melanie Rebaglia, SR/WA turned in her last Committee report, as her term ends on June 30, 2019. She has served in this position since 2013, and has helped guide countless members, including myself, through the IRWA credentialing process. In addition to her current duties, throughout her membership, Melanie has volunteered in other capacities as well, including, working the registration desk at Chapter meetings, stuffing bags at conferences hosted within Region 7, assisting with Chapter 4 hosted forums, seminars and conferences to name a few. Thank you Melanie for all your hard work and dedication!

NESA

Nominations for Chapter 4 *Professional, Employer and Instructor of the Year* awards closed on April 30, 2019. Melinda Burkhart, Committee Chair, has appointed members to her Committee to notify the finalists and review and select the winners, which will be announced at our June 5th Installation and Awards Ceremony.

The annual elections were held, and Michelle Rude withdrew her nomination for candidacy of Secretary to continue her role managing the Chapter 4 website. All incoming officers were elected by acclamation, except for the President, who succeeds to the office of President from the elected position of President-Elect. Congratulations to our 2019-20 Officers:

- John Nidecker, MAI - President
- Jesse Ray, SR/WA – President-Elect and International Director
- Michelle Talbot, SR/WA – Vice-President
- Dianna Nausley-McKeon, SR/WA – Treasurer
- Christopher Anderson – Secretary

I want to thank Melinda for her term as NESA Chair, along with the energy and enthusiasm she brought to the position!

Education

Education Committee Chair, Karen, Wright, SR/WA, has continued to do an outstanding job scheduling classes to meet the needs of our many new members. This fiscal year, Chapter 4 hosted ten IRWA courses, for 182 students. Education is the main source of income for the IRWA, and three Region 7 instructors, Brad Thomas, SR/WA, R/W-RAC and Faith Roland, SR/WA of Chapter 4 and Michael Rabb of Chapter 45, donated their time to ensure our Chapter could break even. Due to the generosity of these instructors, as well as the increase in training needs due to an influx of new members, we exceeded our anticipated education budget. This has allowed the Chapter to increase our contribution to the Right of Way International Education Foundation (RWIEF) to be presented at the annual conference in Portland this June.

Additionally, we are able to donate a gift basket for the RWIEF benefit auction at the Monday Night Event.

Karen continues to work with HQ to obtain continuing education credits for Chapter 4 courses. She has written a [Chapter 4 Education Coordinator policy](#). If you have volunteered to be a course coordinator, please be sure to read the policy, which is located under the [Education](#)

[Policies](#) tab on our Chapter 4 website. Thank you Karen for your continued contributions as Chapter 4 Education Chair!

Membership

The Board approved four new members, and I would like to welcome them to Chapter 4:

1. Jeanne Jorgenson of Contract Land Staff
2. Tara O-Hanlon of Miller Nash Graham and Dunn LLP (May Meeting Presenter)
3. Glenn Price of Washington State Department of Transportation
4. Nicole Bissett of Epic Land Solutions (2019-20 NESAs Chair)

Three of these new members attended the meeting and were eligible to vote at the election, and two of them have already volunteered their service to Chapter 4. (Thank you Nicole and Tara!) In addition, thank you to our Membership Committee Chair, Michele Pescador, SR/WA.

Golf

Golf Chair Andrew Sorba, RWA, has been busy securing individual and corporate sponsorships, advertising and planning the upcoming golf tournament. Come join your peers and colleagues from the right of way industry for a round of golf. All skill levels are welcome and encouraged to participate. The first 12 teams (of 4) registered will receive exclusive Chapter 4 SWAG! The tournament is July 19, 2019, check in at 10:30 AM, with first tee time at noon at The Golf Club at Redmond Ridge. The cost is \$95 per player, which includes greens fees, cart, range balls, lunch, drink ticket and prizes. [Golf tournament registration](#) is open now on line, and full details are on the Chapter 4 website Events page.

A huge thanks to Andrew for organizing, what is sure to be a great event, and for finding some awesome SWAG! Also, thank you to all of our sponsors (in no particular order, Flaridocs, Tierra Right of Way, Contract Land Staff, Abeyta & Associates, Miller Nash Graham & Dunn LLP, Integra Realty Resources Seattle, Universal Field Services Inc., HDR, Inc., Valbridge/ABS, and Brian O'Neill) for your support of Chapter 4 to make this event, other social events and our website possible.

Social

This year, we decided to make our Installation & Awards Ceremony a Chapter Social Event. Friends and family welcome! We have booked a cruise on Lake Union aboard the West Star Yacht with Waterways Cruises and Events for the evening of **June 5, 2019**. The vessel boards at **5:30 PM** from 2441 N Northlake Way, Seattle, WA 98103. The cost is \$50 per person, which includes, a two-hour tour, premium cocktail (no host bar also available), coffee, tea, water, juice and soda, free parking, an array of appetizers, as well as raffle/door prize giveaways.

[Registration for the Installation and Awards Banquet](#) is open now on line on the Chapter 4 website Events page. Please note this venue does not provide contingency for late registrations. Hurry now to register so you do not miss out. **Registration closes promptly, at 8 AM Wednesday, May 29, 2019.**

Young Professionals

Region 7 Representative for Young Professionals (YP), Jesse Ray, SR/WA, has been busy marketing to potential YP professionals, succession planning and gearing up for the Annual

International Education Conference, where they are hosting a social event. The YP Punch Bowl Social will be held Saturday, June 9, 2019 from 6-8 PM at 340 SW Morrison Street in Portland. Please join the YPs for a night of fun and networking. There will be food, drinks, bowling, ping-pong, Karaoke, darts, 80's arcade, foosball, shuffleboard and so much more!

Thank you Jesse for wearing multiple Chapter 4 volunteer hats this year, as our YP representative, Chapter 4 Vice-President, and Program Chair!

Communication

Julie Aune, SR/WA, Communications Committee Chair, has expanded her Committee to include Andrew Sorba, RWA and Michelle Rude to assist with managing the Chapter 4 website. They meet weekly by phone to ensure current communication on all IRWA matters. They are timely and accurate at keeping our members informed through email and website updates.

Thank you Julie, Michelle and Andrew for all your hard work in making our communications effective, efficient and creative! Most notably, for ensuring our new website was up and running smoothly in time for me to nominate it for Website of the Year... your hard work paid off with Chapter 4 being a finalist for the award!

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- June 5th – Installation, Awards & Social Event at Waterways Cruises & Events on Lake Union in Seattle
- June 9th-12th – IRWA International Educational Conference at Downtown Hilton Hotel in Portland, OR
- July 19th – Chapter 4 Golf Tournament at The Golf Club at Redmond Ridge
- September 11, 2019 through May 13, 2020 - Monthly meetings will remain the second Wednesday of each month and resume with the times and locations to be announced.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Installation and Awards Ceremony on June 5, 2019, at Waterways Cruises and Events, 2441 N Northlake Way on Lake Union in Seattle. **Please be sure to register and pre-pay on line by 8 AM, Wednesday, May 29, 2019.**

Respectfully,

Dawn Fletcher,

President IRWA Puget Sound Chapter 4