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APRIL 2010



A Bazaar Site – Kathie and Mary at the Bazaar Del Mundo in San Diego – Photo Submitted by Karen Williams

April Board Meeting

When: Wednesday,
April 7th at 4:30 P.M.

Where: Attorney General's
Office - 1275 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Cost: None

Note: Entrance is on the
North Side of the building
and parking is free



Great Find at the Bazaar – Kathie, Mary, and Karen show off their Kachina Chapter spirit at the Forum. No word yet on when matching ties and earrings will be available. – Photo Submitted by Karen Williams

A Word From Our President ...

Karen L. Williams, SR/WA

The Region 1 Spring Forum was held on March 20 in San Diego. Kathie Sholly, Mary Smith, and I attended as your Chapter 28 representatives. Chris Banks attended as the Region 1 Chair. Minutes of the Forum will be posted to the Region 1 website at: <http://region1.irwachapter46.org>.

Several topics were discussed, including the State of the Association. Some highlights:

- As of December 2009, there were approximately 9,000 members.
- A new 5-level Career Path for SR/WA's is in the preliminary design process.
- A preview of the association budget that will be presented in June in Calgary was discussed and is posted on the Region 1 website.
- The Region 1 Newsletter of the Year Awards went to:
 - Chapter 50, Fresno, CA - Small Chapter
 - Chapter 11, San Diego - Large Chapter
- Chris Banks and Renee Marruffo ran unopposed and will continue to represent our Region as the Region 1 Chair and the Region 1 Vice Chair.
- Each Chapter presented a report. The reports are posted on the Region 1 website listed above as well as the Committee Reports for the Region.
- The Fall Forum 2010 will be held in Sacramento, CA on October 1 and 2.

The **Spring Forum 2011 will be hosted by our Chapter 28**. If you are interested in leading this as the Chair, or if you have any ideas, suggestions, or want to be a part of the preparations, please let one of the Chapter Officers know. You know the saying, "It takes a village.....".

Our next member meeting is scheduled for May 11, and as always, all members are also welcome to attend the Board Meetings. A schedule is posted on the Chapter 28 website at: <http://www.irwachapter28.org>

Last, but most important....Vicki Chamberlin, Chapter 28 Secretary, will have undergone a very serious surgery by the time this is published. I would like to extend her our best wishes, our thoughts and our prayers for a speedy recovery.

When Management Falls Out of Touch: Is the IRWA HQ Staff There?

an Editorial by
Kathie A. Sholly,
SR/WA, R/W-AMC
IRWA Kachina Chapter 28,
1-year International Director

We are all aware of the public outcry over CEOs getting large bonuses during this time of economic strain. Headlines such as “Goldman CEO bonus only \$9-million in nod to public ire” are common. (ONLY \$9-million? Did that “nod”, as you call it, really amount to anything more than a muscle twitch?)

We are also all aware of the public outcry over generous salaries and “perks” given to management personnel in our local governments. The Arizona Republic recently reported the salaries and car allowances given to the various Valley city managers, city attorneys, city clerks, and others, amid pay reductions, furloughs and layoffs of the frontline staff. When questioned, the mayor of one city defended the added “perks” for management by saying, “They (higher-paid employees) are being hit harder. Five percent of a higher salary is different than 5 percent of a lower salary.” (Really? Are you saying that giving up one of the five sports your kids play after school is harder than deciding whether to give up feeding our kids or to give up the roof over their heads?)

For most of us, these attitudes and statements, at the very least, sting. Layoffs, unemployment, reduced pay, reduced benefits – all of that hits all of us very hard. Understandably, we are not happy when we realize that those of a higher authority or position are completely out of touch with what

we are experiencing – and, yet, these people make decisions that affect us financially.

This is how I felt when I studied and questioned the IRWA’s 2010/2011 Draft Budget, which was presented to Region 1 at the recent Spring Forum in San Diego, and which will be presented to the Board of Directors for formal vote in June at the International Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

NOTE: The figures presented included **actual** figures for Fiscal Year 2008-2009, and then **budget** amounts for Fiscal Years 2009-10 and 2010-11. I felt it would have been more helpful to have also been given the **actual** figures (even if only year-to-date) for Fiscal Year 2009-10. That being said ...

It isn’t the entire budget I had problems with. Many segments demonstrate that HQ is proactively cutting costs, and most segments were very much in line with past years, adjusted where one might expect to see adjustment, given the economy. But there were two areas that I felt reflected a degree of being “out of touch” with current situations.

The first area is anticipated income from new membership and membership renewal, which showed about a 6% (nearly 6.5%) increase over the 2009/2010 fiscal year budget. The budget detail states, “We anticipate that income will increase from last year’s budgeted amount, despite downsizing within agencies and Right of Way companies.” The detail goes on to explain that dues amounts will remain unchanged; it is only the number of members (new and renewing) that will increase. Huh? Why? The detail offers no real explanation, but does state, “Our target for next year is 9,540 members.” Targets are great.

Are they always attainable? Not without a viable plan that logically fits current reality.

So I asked Mark Rieck, Executive Vice President of the IRWA, what data indicates that membership will be up, in a time when agency support has been withdrawn, paychecks are slimmer, and many are having to leave the industry altogether.

Mark indicated that the projections for membership growth are predicated on two beliefs: (1) existing certified and designated members will “find a way” to pay their dues rather than lose their standing, and (2) there are places outside of the Southwestern United States (to which, of course, my knowledge is obviously limited) that are improving, economically speaking, and many new members will come from that.

I’ve dogpiled, googled, and bing’d every which way I can think of – yet the information continues to elude me as to where this economic improvement is occurring that will generate at least 540 new members in the coming year (statistically speaking, it would be more than 540, given expected loss in member numbers through attrition, retirement and death). If anyone knows where this magical area is, please let the rest of us know!

The second budget area to catch my attention involved payroll for HQ staff. The budgeted amount for FY 2010-11 is proposed to increase by 9%. The detail for that item does not suggest new bodies would be added to the current 22 fulltime staff, but acknowledges that part of the increased budget amount accounts for “a 28% increase in healthcare benefits for staff in 2011”.

Continued on Page 4

I broke out my calculator and subtracted the benefits costs to compare just the payroll and pension plan figures.

I discovered the proposed budget indicates about a 6% increase in payroll – a smidgen over \$80,000 in all - an annual average of almost \$3,700 per staff member – about \$300 more per month per staff member. Of course, that presumes that the pay increase will be shared equally among the 22 staff members at HQ. In reality, that rarely happens, with some getting more than others.

Again, I asked Mark Rieck, when so many of us are seeing pay reductions, furloughs, and layoffs, what would warrant a pay **raise** for HQ staff? His answer was strictly about retention of current staff. Without a raise, staff might leave and couldn't be replaced.

I felt compelled to argue that, if one staff member left because he or she didn't get a *raise*, there would readily be 50 or more persons knocking on HQ's door the next day to interview for the open position. Others in the room openly agreed. Or has the media been deliberately misleading us, falsely reporting a 20% unemployment rate in the Los Angeles/South Bay area of California, and therefore staff know they could leave and easily find employment elsewhere?

Perhaps it isn't the worry about staff, in general, leaving, but **specific** staff members.

I have to wonder, if the projected increase in membership does not occur, or if any of the other income estimates fall short, how will the pay raises – which do not seem to reflect current trends in the right of way industry – be supported? What necessary expense item in the budget will have to “give” in order to make up the difference?

Have our leaders at HQ, like so many other CEOs and upper management folks around the globe, lost touch with the people they are supposed to represent – the 9,000 members (as of December 2009) of the IRWA?

As one of the International Directors for Chapter 28 that will be asked to vote on this budget in June, I know how I'd like to vote. But I represent you, the membership of Chapter 28, in my vote. To ensure I vote as you, the members, direct me, I encourage you to provide your thoughts.

I have already expressed mine. And then I edited this piece before publication. ☺

To review the budget presented, visit the Region 1 website at:

<http://region1.irwapter46.org/pages/>



SEMINAR **MEETING**

OUR SECOND Seminar meeting for 2010 has been **RE-SCHEDULED** to **April 6th at 11:30 am.**

The Third Seminar Meeting is *tentatively* scheduled for May 4th at 11:30 am.

Please join us, and ask any members who might be interested, to meet and plan details for our **Annual Education Seminar** to occur **September 15 to 17, 2010.**

Meet at the Tierra Right of Way Services' office in the U.S. Bank building at **101 N. 1st Ave, Ste 2075.**

Parking is beneath the building off of Adams, and we are directly on the Light Rail.

Please **RSVP** so that we know how many persons to expect.

PresidentElect@irwapter28.com

Mary A.M. Smith





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OPEN - No Chair at this time

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Upcoming Kachina Chapter Classes

REGISTER TODAY - Contact Course Coordinator with questions
Registration Forms Online at: http://irwchapter28.org/education_classes.asp

IRWA Course 502

Business Relocation

Sponsor: Chapter 28

Date: May 19-20, 2010

Time: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Location:

Tempe Transportation Center
Don Cassano Community Room
200 E. 5th Street
Tempe, AZ 85281

Facilitator:

Beverly J. Francy, SR/WA
Founder and President of
Acquisition Sciences, Ltd.
with offices in Las Vegas and Phoenix

Course Coordinator:

Kristina Guzman

3838 N. Central Ave, Ste 1400
Phoenix, AZ 85012
Phone: 602-604-8118 Ext. 119
Fax: 602-604-9515
Toll Free: 866-574-9961

How to register:

See Above

IRWA Course 505

Advanced Residential Relocation Assistance

Sponsor: Chapter 28

Date: May 21, 2010

Time: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Location:

Tempe Transportation Center
Don Cassano Community Room
200 E. 5th Street
Tempe, AZ 85281

Facilitator:

Beverly J. Francy, SR/WA
Founder and President of
Acquisition Sciences, Ltd.
with offices in Las Vegas and Phoenix

Course Coordinator:

Kristina Guzman

3838 N. Central Ave, Ste 1400
Phoenix, AZ 85012
Phone: 602-604-8118 Ext. 119
Fax: 602-604-9515
Toll Free: 866-574-9961

How to register:

See Above

Meeting Information

MAY MEMBER MEETING AND BREAKFAST

Old Country Buffet
9620 Metro Parkway West, Suite 153
Phoenix, AZ 85051

Date: 05/11/2010

Time: 7:30 till 9:30 am

Cost is \$8.00. Buffet with a large variety of breakfast items and drinks.

Guest Speaker: To Be Announced

Reservation MUST be received by 5PM on May 5, 2010
http://www.irwachapter28.org/chapter_luncheons_rsvp.asp

April Notes

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!
TO THE WINNERS OF A FREE
EDUCATION CLASS**

FEBRUARY WINNERS:

MICKEY MCGUIRE
BRUCE OLSON
MARK KELLER

MARCH WINNERS:

KAREN WILLIAMS
LINDA BEALS
JOHN CERVIN

**To be eligible for a free class only
requires your attendance at an
upcoming luncheon so don't miss out -
See you at the next luncheon!**

THE IRWA KACHINA CHAPTER WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE ITS NEWEST MEMBERS



**Gary Green
Louis Barragan
Sandra McGeorge
Cory Waltemath**



\$100 Discount Coupon

Redeemable for IRWA Kachina
Chapter 28 Course Tuition

Members Name: _____

*Must be a Member of Chapter 28
and attend Three Member Meeting Luncheons*

Executive Board Member signature	Date

Coupon expires one (1) year from latest date above



\$100 Discount Coupon

Redeemable for IRWA Kachina
Chapter 28 Course Tuition

Members Name: _____

*Must be a Member of Chapter 28
and attend Three Member Meeting Luncheons*

Executive Board Member signature	Date

Coupon expires one (1) year from latest date above

