



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations Chapter 33,

2012 was very good for IRWA Chapter 33 and we are hoping to have a better 2013. IRWA Headquarters introduced new certification plans and Tamara Benson, Chapter 33 Professional Development Chair developed a quick reference guide to help each member identify their current status on the road to certification and develop a plan to achieve their goals. Tami's reference guide was then shared with other chapters in the Region to assist their membership.

Kevin Stout added classes to the schedule once he was made aware of the need which helped many of you attain your personal goals. We now have several members with new credentials which supports their professionalism to outside clients and within the IRWA organization.

Chapter 33's membership increased in 2012 and in the last 3 months we added over 25 new members. We added one new committee, the Utility Committee and are adding a second in January, 2013; the Pipeline Committee. Thank you for working hard to help make Chapter 33 a vital organization for the Right-of-Way Professional in Oklahoma and I look forward to seeing each of you at the next Chapter meeting on January, 25, 2013 in OKC.

With the holidays upon us, I asked our Chapter's leadership to share their favorite Christmas memories—I hope you enjoy reading them on the next page.

My Christmas memory began with an argument and ended with a new family tradition. The first year of being "Santa", my husband refused to wrap anything, claiming Santa was too busy. He believed the awe of seeing everything at one time on Christmas morning was a magical moment but I disagreed completely. In my family, "the true magical moment" was on Christmas morning when Santa's deliveries were mixed in with family gifts. After weeks of negotiations we came to a win-win conclusion. We opened the gifts to each other on Christmas Eve and then let one big item from Santa remain in plain sight while Mrs. Clause wrapped everything else. We continue that tradition today. The true Magic is finding what works best for you and the people you love. Enjoy every moment!

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year,

*Lori Vernon,  
SR/WA, R/W-RAC*



**Lori Vernon,**  
SR/WA, R/W-RAC  
IRWA Chapter 33 President

FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

With determination and lots of tricks, my parents did their best to keep my brother, sister, and me convinced there was a Santa no matter how old we were. Finally one Christmas, my sister and I were determined to reveal the truth, so we searched the house for clues when our parents were gone for the day. But, our delight in discovering the hidden gifts also hit us with the disappointment of losing the “wonder” of the holiday. With a child of my own now, I understand the importance of sharing the joy and keeping the magic of Santa for as long as possible. Happy Holidays! Yes, there is a Santa Claus!

- Alex Souder



On Christmas Eve, once my brother and I were in bed we were not supposed to leave our rooms. One Christmas Eve, late late at night, I crept down the hall with my blanket and snuggled in under the Christmas tree. I made sure the cookies and milk were still there and I settled in to “catch Santa in the act”. Of course, I fell asleep but I woke up Christmas morning with presents all around me with the cookies and milk gone. I was a true believer!!

- Sara Wyly



My favorite Christmas memory actually happened last weekend. My daughter just turned 3. Although she enjoyed Christmas last year, she didn't really grasp the whole concept. So, my daughter and I spent last Saturday putting up the trees (she has her own pink tree for her room), Christmas lights and decorations. The enthusiasm and wonderment she showed took me back to my youth when I remember Christmas being the most exciting time of the year.

- Aaron Adkins

There are certain holiday movies that our family seems to watch every year. They are always just the cheesiest movies but for some reason or other I feel compelled to watch them at this time of year. One of my personal favorites is Smoky Mountain Christmas with Lee Majors and Dolly Parton. A true holiday classic!

- Joe Coates

My favorite memory of Christmas happened in 1969. We had a metal Santa Claus figure that had a light bulb for a nose. My brother and I had to flip it over to tighten up the light bulb holder while our older sister held onto the fixture on the light bulb side. Once we were through, we were all looking at our handy work and I decided to plug it in for everyone so when it was flipped over the light would be on. Little did I know the light bulb had a crack in it. When I plugged it in it blew up, burned a hole in my sister's sock and singed her leg! With smoke coming from her sock my sister went running through the house screaming over and over "they electrocuted me!"

- Kevin Stout

My wife and I are empty-nesters. We have a 5-br house our kids grew up in, and ours is the only bedroom not vacant most of the year, until Christmas. All six of our kids travel with their kids and merge in one big chaotic Tulsa gathering. Grandkids are running everywhere. Parents are remembering old times. Grandma and I sit back and absorb it all. Then, in a flash, New Years arrives and it is all over, and we wait until the next year's gathering once more. What a life!

- Bill Sanders

When I was about five years old, I was quite sick on Christmas Eve night. In blankets on the couch, I watched my sister and brothers enjoy opening gifts and eating treats. Outside in the Minnesota cold and snow, we heard the sound of sleigh bells. Santa appeared at the window! My mother told me to go to the window and give Santa a kiss through the glass. As I approached, he placed his cheek to the window and I “kissed him.” He waved and disappeared in the dark. We heard the bells and a faraway “ho, ho, ho.” I was so happy!

- Ed Opstein

As a youngster, Christmas was always about family getting together. New clothes, a few toys. Christmas Dinners (could be noon or mid-afternoon) were always with Aunts, Uncles and Cousins. Generally, a backyard football game. The annual Monopoly Game to determine the Tycoon for the new year. As I grew older the “Real Reason for the Season” became real to me.

- Rick Park

My uncle was a firefighter and would sometimes be on duty on Christmas Eve. My entire family would gather a meal together for his Station house and deliver the dinner while singing Christmas carols. Unfortunately, no one in my family can sing, so it brought more comedic relief than it did music enjoyment. It's one of many special, family Christmas memories.

- Tami Benson



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## IRWA CHAPTER 33 MINUTES OF MEETING

President Lori Vernon called the meeting to order at 11:45 AM. Secretary Rick Park reported 28 members and 6 guests for a total of 34 present. Attendees introduced themselves and their guests.

The membership discussed the published minutes of the October 5, 2012 meeting. Bill Sanders moved to accept the minutes as shown. Russell Verba seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as published.

**Committee reports were provided to attending members as shown on the following page.**



**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SERVICE!**

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### TREASURER

Treasurer, **Sara Wyly**, reported balances of:  
 \$50,386.15 in the checking account,  
 \$32,755.60 in one CD, and  
 \$11,308.32 in another CD for total liquid assets of  
 \$94,450.07 for the chapter.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership Chair, **Sasha Jbara**, reported the Chapter has 8 new applicants:

- John Brogan, RedSky Land LLC
- Jullet A Capeheart, Coates Field Service
- Richard Dawson, Universal Field Services
- Michael P Gallo, Universal Field Services
- Dale L. Hancock, Enogex, LLC
- Lacle M. Jones, Meshek & Associates, PLC
- Joe R. McFerron, RedSky Land, LLC
- Delana D. Staats, Chesapeake Midstream Management LLC
- Ann M. Welshans, Universal Field Services

Tamara Benson moved to approve the new applicants.  
 Kevin Stout seconded the motion.

The applicants were approved as members of Chapter 33.

The Chapter discussed strategies to continue membership growth and retention.

### EDUCATION

Education Chair, **Sasha Jbara**, reported: SR/WA Study course was held last week. **Course 219** will be held in Oklahoma City next week, December 10, 11. This course is required for Course Instructors.



### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development Chair, **Tamara Benson**, reported she will work with Chapter members to help them chart a path to their Professional Designation.

### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Nominations and Elections Chair, **Joe Coates**; no report was provided.

### OLD BUSINESS

- International will be sending reminders to those who have not paid their dues for Year 2013.
- Sasha will also send an email reminding members of

Chapter 33 to pay their dues for Year 2013.

- Order Forms for ordering Chapter Jacket were made available. If you want to order a jacket Chapter 33 will pay \$25.00 and shipping charges for each member.
- Chapter 33 will present a program on Environmental at the Summer Forum. **Sasha Jbara & Rick Park** will work to find a Presenter from the Environmental Field.
- Nomination and Election Committee will begin the search of the membership for the Office of Chapter Secretary in January. If you are interested contact **Joe Coates**.
- Now is the time to begin thinking of members for Professional of the Year.

### NEW BUSINESS

- Region 2 Winter Forum will February 7, 2013 in Fort Worth
- January 25, 2013 will be in Oklahoma City.
- March 22, 2013 meeting will be in Tulsa.
- Keep May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup> on your schedule for the Installation of Officers Banquet in Oklahoma City.



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**Aaron Adkins** introduced **Tamara Benson** and **Ed Opstein** as Speakers for the meeting. Tamara and Ed presented a program on Map 21 and the changes in the purchase of Right of Way for Federal Projects. Tamara and Ed also presented a program on “Understanding Behavior Styles for Negotiation Success” that involved participation of the membership.

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A drawing was held for two \$25.00 door prizes. The winners were **Russell Verba** and **Mark List**.

The next Chapter 33 meeting is set for January 25 at 11:30 AM. The location is to be determined.

**Kevin Stout** moved that the meeting be adjourned. **Alex Souder** seconded the motion. Membership approved the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 PM.

Attest: Chapter 33 Secretary, **Rick Park**.

## 2012 CHAPTER 33 NEWSLETTER

Ed Opstein, SR/WA,  
R/W-NAC, R/W-RAC

Are you in touch with reality? What kinds of mistakes will you make if you are not? There's a fable about three blind men who had a chance to experience an elephant for the first time. When asked what the elephant looked like, the man who held the trunk said it was like a powerful snake. The one that felt the elephant's leg said it was like a tree. The one who laid his hands against the side of the elephant said it was like a huge wall covered with bristles.

When dealing with people, reality is different from our perceptions. Your perceptions of what people say and do come through the many filters of your personality, your energy level, your previous experiences with this person and similar people, your expectations and needs, and other criteria. All those lenses shift the message you're getting from someone. Unless you have a long history with them, your "understanding" of what they're saying or intending or doing might be just a shadow of reality.

Clarify what others are saying and set aside all the "filters" until you can hear and see more clearly what message is being sent. Ask what the other person needs without judging the response. This will help you better "see" and know whether you're dealing with a snake or an elephant!

We are on the web!  
[www.irwach33.org](http://www.irwach33.org)



## THANKS TO OUR ADVERTISERS!

If you are interested in advertising in the 2013 series of Chapter 33 Newsletters, please remit a check for \$75.00 made payable to IRWA Chapter 33 to Sara Wyly, SR/WA, R/W-RAC, Universal Field Services, Inc., P.O. Box 35666, Tulsa, OK 74153.



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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At the end of October, IRWA released the approved "Experience Matrix" to help PDC chairs determine if an applicant for a certification or designation meets the experience criteria. In the past, determining qualifying experience was somewhat subjective and sometimes challenging for PDC chairs. This detailed matrix can be found on the IRWA website.

Congratulations to Sara Wyly for recertifying her R/W- RAC, Gene Gurganus for submitting his completion application for his SR/WA, and Sandra Luegge for submitting her completion application for her R/W-URAC certification.

As a reminder, Chapter 33 will be offering Course 100 – Principles of Right of Way January, 14 – 17, 2013 in OKC. Course 100 is a basic requirement towards earning certifications along the Generalist path, including the SR/WA. I encourage anyone interested in their professional development to sign up and take this class!

- Tami Benson  
SR/WA, R/W-URAC, R/W-RAC