

BAY CONNECTIONS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings Fellow Potomac Chapter 14 Members !

This will be my final newsletter message as Chapter 14 President. It is certainly an understatement to say that this has been a year unlike any other.

It was supposed to be like this . . .

In late 2019, my second tenure as Chapter President (the first was in 1996) was fast approaching and I was excited about Chapter 14's prospects in 2020-2021. After all,

2021 would be a year to celebrate; both for our Chapter and for Right of Way Professionals because it marked our Chapter's 65th Anniversary, and, on a larger scale, the 50th Anniversary of the implementation of "*The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970*".

Then everyone's lives were turned upside-down, and it went like this . . .

The first confirmed case of COVID 19 in the US was reported on or about January 20, 2020. As the deadly pandemic widened, it gradually became apparent that we could not hold any "in person" events ... no International Education Conference, no Regional Forums, no Chapter meetings.

The great expectations that we all had for 2020-2021 came crashing down – and some 16 months later -- we are still struggling to overcome this public health crisis. But there is a light at the end of this tunnel.

And as ROW professionals, we will come out of "*The Time of COVID*" having learned some important new lessons and acquired some new skills. One of the more frequently used terms during this time is "*pivot*" or some variation of the word.

During the *Time of COVID*, we have pivoted with regard to keeping our members informed. We have recently established a new Chapter website. We are just getting started but check us out at <https://irwachapter14.org>. We've utilized E-communications and our Chapter Newsletter to keep members informed of all IRWA/Right of Way news and information. We also have successfully held "virtual" chapter meetings using video-conferencing.

It has been my honor to serve as President during this time. My involvement in IRWA has been a hugely rewarding experience for me. When I think back to all the opportunities, professional relationships, and great friends that I have gained through IRWA – at all levels, I have nothing but great things to say about our organization. I wish you all the best, and even though I do not plan to attend the San Antonio Conference in person at this point, I just might see you all next year in Cleveland!

**ALL THE BEST!
MIKE JONES, SR/WA**

CHAPTER 14 EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

John (Mike) Jones, SR/WA
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President-Elect

Jessica Brown, RWA
jbrown7984@gmail.com

Vice President

Joi Singh, Esq.
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Secretary

Brenda Fuller,
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Tiara McCray,
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CHAPTER EVENTS & NEWS ...

GENERAL MEETING

MAY General Membership

**VIRTUAL Meeting to be held on
Thursday, MAY 20 at 11 am**

Please NOTE: All Chapter 14 members will receive the meeting agenda and log-in instructions in advance of the virtual meeting.

UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS

Thursday, June 17 — Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, July 15 — General Meeting

ATTENTION ALL CHAPTER 14 MEMBERS:

Chapter 14 Potomac Chapter is now accepting nominations for the offices of President Elect, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer. **Nominations will be held open for 30 days and will close on May 17, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. EST.** This electronic nomination process is in lieu of nominating members from the floor. For each member whom you nominate, please provide the member's full name, email address, and phone number. All nominations may be submitted to irwachapter14elections@gmail.com. The current slate is as follows:

President-Elect—Joi Singh, Esquire

Vice President — Brenda Fuller

Secretary — Shaun McClain, SR/WA

Treasurer—Tiara McCray

Asst. Sec./Treasurer — OPEN

DON'T FORGET TO CAST YOUR VOTE

For more news on Chapter 14, check out the Chapter's Website
<https://irwachapter14.org>

National Award Finalists

Chapter 14 Members Jessica Brown, RWA and Vanessa Ringgold, SR/WA, RW-RAC were announced as Finalists for two of the IRWA National Awards.



Jessica Brown was announced as a Finalist for the prestigious **Young Professional of the Year Award**. This award recognizes the contributions and achievements of a "Young" professional (age 35 or under). As the Chapter 14 President-Elect, Jessica has demonstrated her involvement in IRWA both at the local and regional levels. She has volunteered to Chair chapter committees and has served as a Chapter officer since 2016. Jessica earned her RWA Generalist Certification in

2018 and is a FAA-licensed drone pilot. She is currently advancing her ROW education and training as a licensed appraiser. Jessica also serves on the DEI Committee for the Appraisal Foundation.



Vanessa Ringgold was announced as a Finalist for the coveted **Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Award**. Named after the Association's founder, the Balfour Award honors professionals who have demonstrated exemplary support to the Association. Candidates are selected based on outstanding contributions made through leadership positions in the Chapter, Region and International levels; fulfillment of educational courses and activities, and achievement of IRWA's professional designations. Vanessa has served as an officer at every level of Chapter 14, served as Program and Education Chair and currently serves as Chair for the Chapter Newsletter. She has also served as the Region 4 Representative for the International Nominations and Elections Committee and recently served as the Region 4 Representative for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force. She earned her Relocation Assistance Certification in 2008 and her Senior Right of Way Designation in 2010.

CONGRATULATIONS JESSICA & VANESSA!
OUR CHAPTER IS ROOTING FOR YOU TO BRING HOME THE AWARDS ... Either Way You Both Are Already Winners!!!

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REGION 4 HIGHLIGHTS ...



REGION 4 VIRTUAL SPRING FORUM — HELD ON APRIL 23, 2021

Led By Region 4 Chair, Ida Parrett, SR/WA

Forum Highlights:

- * **New Pittsburgh Chapter formed—Chapter 88 to become part of Region 5**
- * **Diversity Task Force Report presented to International Governance Council — read recommendations from summary report on Page 4.**
- * **Presentations from two candidates running for International Secretary — read candidate profiles on Page 4.**

- ◆ **Congratulations to Julie Lewis honored as Region 4 Professional of the Year—New York Chapter 18. Julie will be recognized by the Right of Way Educational Foundation at the Annual Conference in San Antonio.**
- ◆ **New Region 4 Leadership Nominations — Chair, Derrick Roma, SR/WA, Chapter 18 New England Vice Chair, Ross Greene, Esq., SR/WA, Chapter 52 Virginia Julie Lewis was elected as the Region 4 Secretary/Treasurer**
- ◆ **2021 Fall Forum will be hosted by Chapter 23 Connecticut and will feature a Joint Forum with Region 5 as preparation for the Annual Conference in Cleveland for 2022. Tentative Forum date—October 1-3, 2021 in Cleveland. More details to come in a future newsletter.**

IN THE NEWS HARRIET TUBMAN FAMILY HOMESITE FOUND ...

(April 19, 2021) – Maryland Lieutenant Governor Boyd K. Rutherford joined state and federal partners at the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center (in Cambridge, MD) to announce the discovery of the historic homesite once owned by the father of famed abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman. The former home of Harriet Tubman’s father, Ben Ross, was discovered on property acquired in 2020 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as an addition to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Dorchester County, Maryland. An archaeology team led by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), conducted research that led to the discovery.

MDOT SHA’s archaeology team, led by MDOT SHA Chief Archaeologist Dr. Julie Schablitsky, began searching for evidence linked to Ben Ross in November. When they returned in March to continue their search, Dr. Schablitsky and her team found numerous artifacts dating to the 1800s, including nails, brick, glass, dish fragments and even a button. Confirmation that these artifacts were evidence of Ben Ross’s cabin, Dr. Schablitsky discussed their historical and cultural significance.

“The importance of discovering Ben Ross’ cabin here is the connection to Harriet Tubman. She would’ve spent time here as a child, but also she would’ve come back and been living here with her father in her teenage years, working alongside him,” said Dr. Schablitsky. “This was the opportunity she had to learn about how to navigate and survive in the wetlands and the woods. We believe this experience was able to benefit her when she began to move people to freedom.”

For the full article and more information on this historical find visit:

<https://www.roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/pressreleasedetails.aspx?newsId=3881&PageId=818>

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/20/us/harriet-tubman-maryland-archeology-trnd/index.html>

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ASSOCIATION NEWS ...

CANDIDATES FOR INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY



**Denise Skinner, SR/WA,
PMP**

I am a listener, a collaborator and am solution oriented. Over my career as an appraiser and project manager I have developed a skill set of creating plans, pulling teams together and moving initiatives forward. These are skills that can be used to serve the Association. I have a proven track record as a leader, having served through both the Chapter and Region levels. I would appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve the Association and respectfully ask for your vote to be the next IEC Secretary.

My goal is to develop a business plan so that our designation means more to the public! I recommend we take a step back and develop a plan to promote our designations within public agencies and private organizations across all market sectors. If we can get more exposure and recognition across the United States and in other countries, it will only add value to our credentials, which will increase membership. ... I humbly come to you with a desire to help the IRWA effect the change needed as we grow. Please consider voting for me as International Secretary.



**Virginia J. (Pompa) Anderson,
SR/WA, R/W-RAC, R/W-NAC**

67th Annual Education Conference

SAN ANTONIO, TX — Marriot Rivercenter

June 6 - 9, 2021 In Person & Virtual

It's not too late to attend this year's Annual Education Conference. Make your plans now to enjoy a safe, socially distanced annual conference with opportunities to learn, network, and engage with other ROW professionals. With your live registration, you also have virtual access and can earn a total of up to 48 hours of CE credits*!

For all the details visit www.irwaonline.org/events

Don't forget to sign up for the RWEIF Monday Night Fundraising event. You can participate in the auction on-line ... visit the Foundation's website for all the details:
<https://www.rwief.org/events-2/>

DIVERSITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **INCLUDE DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION IN IRWA MISSION/VALUE STATEMENT**—revise to highlight importance of DEI.
- 2) **RECRUITMENT** — enhance recruitment efforts to attract diverse members.
- 3) **LEADERSHIP** — make leadership development available to as many Members as possible, with an effort towards a diversity of thought and background.
- 4) **ADD DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION** in existing courses, and develop new DEI courses for professional development.
- 5) **CONSULT WITH A DEI PROFESSIONAL EVALUATOR** — in establishing initiatives and facilitating a more in-depth investigation of the Association and its needs.

For a copy of the full Summary Report contact your Chapter President or Region 4 Chair.