



## CHAPTER 2 TAKES A LOOK BACK AS A HISTORIC MILESTONE APPROACHES

BY TARA PETERSON, SR/WA

In conjunction with its Diamond Anniversary, Chapter 2 is proud to announce its upcoming 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary event planned for Friday, April 19, 2013 at the Lafayette Events Center in Lafayette, California. All IRWA members and guests are invited to attend as we take some time to honor the past, recognize the accomplishments of the present, and look forward to our future.

In 1935, John De Vere, a Right of Way Agent with Pacific Telephone, heard about the new American Right of Way Association, which had been formed the previous year in Los Angeles. After discussions with Chapter 1, Chapter 2 started to take form, and was established as the fledgling Association's Northern California Chapter. On April 19, 1938, the first meeting was held at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. A special delegation from Chapter 1, including Frank Balfour, the Association's founder, attended the meeting and outlined plans for nationalizing the association.

Chapter 2's founding members came from all across Northern California, including Sacramento, Stockton, Eureka and the Greater Bay Area. They represented a diverse range of organizations such as the California Division of Highways (later known as Caltrans), Bank of America, Standard Oil, Pacific Telephone, the State Board of Equalization, East Bay Municipal Utility District, A. T. & S. F. Railway, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, as well as many title companies.

Due to the tremendous growth and large size of Northern California, over the years, a few areas have branched off to form their own chapters. Sacramento Chapter 27 was established in 1959, and the San Jose Chapter 42 was established in 1963. Still, our San Francisco chapter has remained strong, with about 200 members to date.

Membership in Chapter 2 has fluctuated over the years. The lowest point came during World War II, but after the war, membership increased steadily in the years following in response

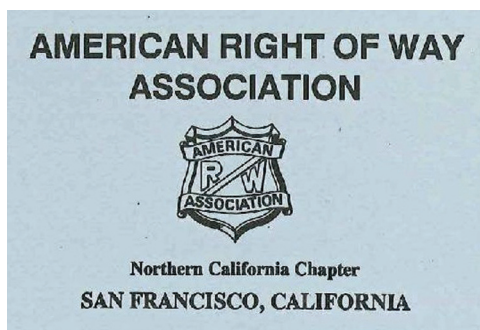
to major post-war projects, including the Interstate Highway System, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) rail system, and the California Aqueduct. As with most chapters, our members represent a variety of disciplines in the right of way field.

Our current members are focused on leaving a legacy of providing quality public projects while protecting the rights of private property owners. Some of the exciting projects our members are currently involved with include the California High Speed Rail, Bay Bridge Retrofit, San Francisco Central Subway and BART extensions.

Our Chapter has had some truly notable members over the years. One was Sophie Yore, who served as secretary to the Chief Right of Way Agent at the Department of Highways. From Chapter 2's inception until she passed away in 1990, Sophie kept all of the Chapter records. At our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, Sophie was named an honorary Chapter member. After her passing, we established an annual award in her honor intended to reward similarly generous acts to the Chapter and Association.

Another remarkable member was Donna Dawkins, who is considered by many to be a pioneer for women in the right of way profession. Donna was a Chapter President and also received the International Newsletter of the Year Award. When she passed away in 2001, her husband Steve established the Donna Dawkins Memorial Scholarship fund. This generosity has provided many college scholarships to Chapter 2 members and their families over the years. Last but not least Chapter 2 has also been proud to count Jim Finnegan, SR/WA, as a member. He is a Past International President and the founder of the Finnegan Fun Run, a favorite activity at International Education Conferences. Jim is retired now, but attends our events when he can.

For more details about the anniversary celebration and for registration information, visit the Chapter 2 website at [www.irwachapter2.org](http://www.irwachapter2.org).



Old logo from the early days of the Association



Donna Dawkins with her husband Steve



Proposed Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system circa 1966