



Making Waves in Right of Way

Course 900 at Shell Beach

BY JEN MIZRAHI

Though virtual classes have been successfully implemented since the start of the pandemic, complex courses can often be lonely and confusing when taken online. So, after over a year-and-a-half suspension of in-person classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two determined course coordinators, one fierce instructor and 20 eager students decided to mask up and head to the Central Coast of California to attend Course 900 — Principles of Real Estate Engineering. Region 1's Chapter 47 hosted a dynamic two-day course, which was filled to max capacity!

Day one of the class dawned with clear blue skies, and a gentle breeze off the ocean brought in temperatures in the mid-seventies. The actual class took place in the banquet room of the vista-laden Spyglass Inn Restaurant in Shell Beach. The sound of the waves crashing on the cliffs could be heard through the backdoor. Instructor Laura Slye rose above the ambient chaos as she deftly led students through plan, profile and cross sections with ample breaks for attendees to soak up the seascape. To everyone's delight, fresh fruit, a plated lunch and freshly baked cookies were served throughout the day. In the evening, some attendees took advantage of San Luis Obispo's epic, weekly farmer's market while others ventured to nearby Pismo and Avila Beaches to enjoy the sunset and local cuisine.

Day two arrived with the same beautiful, bright skies. The class embarked on skill building which included township and section identification, area calculations, plotting metes and bounds and station offset descriptions. Lunch that day was a delicious, local Santa Maria-style BBQ, which included tri-tip, chicken, seasoned potatoes, baked beans, garlic bread and tossed salad. At the end of the afternoon, a group photo was snapped just minutes before an immense layer of fog rolled in, embracing the coastline and completely obscuring the view of the ocean.

Several senior right of way agents attended the class, and Laura remarked, "This has been one of the richest dialogues of any 900 course I've ever taught." Don Irelan, SR/WA, added, "During my 40+ years as an IRWA member, I have attended 50+ continuing education classes, and this one was the most enjoyable and useful." Preston Good, SR/WA, called it "an extraordinary experience for all."



If you missed this beachside course, and you are a bit jealous of the folks who didn't, don't despair. Rumor has it that Region 1, Chapter 47 may be planning a repeat performance in the Spring of 2022. Stay tuned for details!

Thank you to Instructor Laura Slye for persevering through four sets of airline changes to get to California and for dragging a hefty set of surveyor chains in her suitcase all the way from Washington. Kudos to Chapter 47 Education Chair Susan Freebourn for spreading the word of the course to the Regions. Applause to J.T. Katavich for his technical assistance and help with the course coordination. Also, much gratitude to the IRWA for providing right of way agents the education, tools and confidence to interpret maps, plans and legal descriptions so we can intelligently communicate with engineers, property owners and attorneys. Of course, thank you to every manager, boss or broker/owner who values these courses and supports our continuing education. Lastly, bravo to each and every student who showed up and braved this fantastic course. 🌊



Jennifer Mizrahi is a right of way agent and escrow coordinator for Hamner, Jewell & Associates, a specialized governmental real estate firm servicing all of California. She currently holds the RWA certification and is awaiting review of her application for the RWP designation. She has self-published a children's picture book entitled "Terrible, Terrible Things," and LOVES spending time at the beach with her family.