

Dear Nominating Committee,

On behalf of the Greater Chicagoland chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, I would like to nominate Aron Rissman for National's Chapter President award.

During his two years of service, Aron has had to do much more than our Chapter President is usually required to do: more phone calls, more hand-holding, more emails, more physical presence needed than during an average two year term. Aron is always good-natured, never once losing his temper or his grace as he continues to inspire and encourage members to do more than they have ever have in order to keep the chapter active and engaged, without an Executive Director for more than a year and in the midst of a pandemic.

Before and during his presidency, Aron has been Chair of Vendor Council and actively working with other committees to help plan engaging meetings & educational roundtables, as well as strategizing with Membership to find and keep members. He is a regular participant in the All Chapters Presidents calls.

NARI-GC Executive Director Mimi Altman left for another opportunity just a few months into the start of Aron's term. Aron took the reins in established a strong bond with NARI National members in order to assure as many resources as possible to help our chapter move forward at a time when our volunteering members were stretched thin and we were without an Executive Director. He worked tirelessly to help our chapter find and secure a new Executive Director which took much longer than any of us anticipated. Aron continued to inspire and encourage members to do more than they ever had to in order to cover the ED duties, shouldering a lot of the errand-running, fact-finding and follow-up himself. NARI-GC weathered many unusual storms in the past two years, atypical events that would be challenging during the best of times. During the past two years, our chapter completely revised our website--twice (Aron was instrumental in keeping the committee fresh & on-task), moved out of the office space we occupied for the last 17 years (a two weekend project spearheaded by Aron), discovered anomalies with the bank we had been using for years necessitating a move to a new bank (Aron ran around for signatures, additional paperwork, etc), hired & trained a new Executive Director (Aron & I worked together on formulating a Want Ad, interviewing, and training) and worked diligently to find interesting, informative and timely topics to make sure members knew that NARI-GC was working to keep them on top of events and changes in our industry, state and country (Aron shared information he received from regularly attending the Presidents calls and other sources he was actively searching).

What makes Aron an even better leader is that he participates in all of the NARI-GC meetings and events, just the same way he always did before becoming President. He's one of our cooks at the annual Tailgate event, he and his whole family participated in our virtual scavenger hunt—it was so much fun to see him interacting with his wife, daughters and dogs too. You could see the love and camaraderie they all share! Aron also checks in regularly with those of us who are pulling a little extra weight while our new ED, Laura Kritikos, learns the ropes. He talks to Laura several times a week and is always available for her calls. He is quick to offer assistance, advice or simply an ear if that is what is needed to any of our members.

All of this, and Aron is still successful in his full time, full commission job with Mr. Floor. I keep expecting him to tear open his shirt and show us the big "S" on a leotard underneath it.

I join Don C. Van Cura Sr., MCR, CKBR, GCP, CLC, UDCP and Past President as well as Jeff Kida, CR and incoming President for 2021 in nominating Aron for this prestigious National award. Please consider this “super-man” for this year’s Chapter President Award.

Most sincerely,

Sherry Winchester Schultz

NARI-GC Past President

Chair of Meetings & Programs



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12-17-20

Dear NARI friends,

I am honored to recommend Aron Rissmon for the Chapter President Award.

There is an old saying that “a friend in need is a friend indeed”. We could not have been blessed with a more dedicated person at a crucial time. Aron became the Chicago chapter president two years ago. Shortly after taking the helm, the chapter was confronted with a multitude of unexpected challenges.

Our previous Chapter executive left abruptly without any notice. There was no transfer of information or hand off of critical data. It was soon discovered that our long-established processes assigned to the executive director were in total disarray. Suddenly, tasks needed to be handled by volunteers. Aron saw to it that the work load was distributed to keep things running while taking on much of the workload himself.

Challenges Aron faced included reconciling accounts, changing banks and reinventing chapter operations. Our website was antiquated and dysfunctional. Attempts at updating did not go well with the departure of the executive director. Again, Aron was up to the task and saw to it that we now have a greatly improved website.

Attending local meetings, committee meetings and national meetings also absorbed much of Aron’s “free” time.

As the building the chapter office was located in was being sold, we had to move out, find storage and find a new home; assigning a new mailing address, new stationary, etc. All this added to the work load. While some of these day-to-day functions may seem routine, imagine doing this without the executive director during a pandemic.

Now, finding a new executive director, interviews and all the communications and training involved was a huge hurdle in itself.

Aron has never directed from a distance. He has continuously been present and involved in all the chapter meetings and events. At chapter picnics, Aron volunteers as one of the cooks. Adding a pandemic to these events certainly compounded the pressure to keep members involved.

Speaking with Aron recently, we reminisced about the obstacles our chapter has faced. While he admitted it was not easy being president during this time, he said, “don’t worry, as my term is finished, I am not going anywhere”.

“A president when in need, is truly a president, indeed”

I cannot think of a more deserving NARI member for the Chapter President Award.

Sincerely,



Don C. Van Cura Sr., MCR, CKBR, GCP, CLC, UDCP



CotY²⁰¹⁵
National winner
Residential Exterior \$100,000 to \$200,000

CotY²⁰¹³
Regional winner
Residential Kitchen Over \$120,000

CotY²⁰¹¹
Regional winner
Residential Exterior Specialty

MEMO

From: Jeff Kida
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12/16/2020

To: NARI Chapter President Award Nominating Committee

RE: Nomination of Aron Rissman President, NARI of Greater Chicago
Term January 1st, 2019 to January 1st, 2021

I am writing to nominate Aron Rissman for the Chapter President Award.

Over that last two years Aron has guided our chapter through what can only be described as a perfect storm that would crush an average person or chapter.

Storm Factor One: Website Breakdown

Early into his first year NARIGC found out our website needed to be rebuilt because the underlying technology used to build the site was no longer being supported. With chapter resources at a premium Aron was able to leverage one of his vendors to working within our budget to fix and support the old website while we build a new one.

The Board of Directors then Authorized Our ED (Executive Director) to oversee the new website design and funded the project.

Storm Factor Two and Three: Bad Website Redesign and Resignation

A few months later the ED previewed the new website not built to meet our needs and resigned. Aron once again sprang into action directly overseeing the website project and directly overseeing the chapter operations as well as starting an executive search for a new ED.

Storm Factor Four: Searching

While leading a six-to-eight-month search for a new ED, screening and interviewing multiple candidates Aron also picked up our mail and distributed it to other board members helping the cause.

Storm Factor Five: Losing Our Lease

We were informed we would have to vacate the office soon. You can imagine what it takes to clean out an office that has been there for decades. Aron once again took charge and helped empty the office and made alternate temporary arrangements for our phones and mail.

MEMO

Storm Factor Six: Membership Rolls

A review of our membership rolls and income revealed that our membership role was approximately 35% less than we were told. Leaving a gaping hole in our budget. Aron helped reduce our expenses many times and keep us afloat. This was no pleasure cruise.

Storm Factor Six: COVID 19

Just when you think we were clear of the storm here comes COVID 19. Aron leads the charge to bring in our new ED, Laura Kritikos. Just as that process starts here comes COVID 19. While I recognize we are all dealing in one shape or form with COVID 19, imagine dealing with all these other factors at the same time. Aron found a way to get it done.

At the height of this storm Aron still found time to organize a NARI group to go downtown to The Ronald McDonald House and cook breakfast for families staying there. Aron coordinated the food purchase as well as the volunteers. Again, sacrificing family time to help.

In Summary, Aron proved what many of us already knew about him. He is a person of the highest integrity and a man that keeps his word. In fact, I don't think Aron has ever said no to anyone for anything regarding NARI. Not only have I never heard Aron say no, but I also never saw him quit or heard him complain. No matter what was thrown at him in these past two years there was always room on his shoulders.

One last thing, did I mention Aron has a job. Many of us own our companies. During all this Aron still got the job done, literally, for Mr. Floor.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely



Jeff Kida, CR
Owner, DDS Design Services, LLC
Executive Vice President, NARI of Greater Chicago