President's Message

Michael Starling, Shoreline Surveyors

We are deep into the dog days of Summer and Mother Nature is flexing her muscles. We have had some extreme heat, humidity & storms over the past several weeks. I hope everyone exercises caution when working outside in this weather and encourage your employees to do the same.

I would like to thank the Monticello Chapter for hosting the Summer Board meeting, seminar & golf outing. Steve Ellinger and his team did an excellent job and provided us with an entertaining and beneficial weekend. Our next Board meeting is scheduled for September 16 in the Mount Vernon Chapter. I understand that they have an exciting program prepared for us and look forward to seeing many our members there. Mid-September in northern Virginia should provide beautiful weather for golf on Friday, the 15th. Take a day off and come out to the golf course and enjoy fellowship with your fellow surveyors. Do you know a surveyor that is not a member of VAS? Invite them to come with you for a round of golf. Invite them to come to the Friday night dinner. Invite them to attend the Board meeting with you. Our membership numbers need to be nurtured by everyone. We all know at least one surveyor that is not a member. Let’s show them what the Association is doing for them. The VAS can be a lot stronger with more members, and our members receive a 20% discount for referring a new, regular, voting member off of their following year’s dues.

I had the pleasure of attending a Western Chapter meeting in Salem on July 12, 2016. We shared good food, fellowship & information. I’d like to thank Matt Mosteller and his team for their hospitality. On my way to Salem I stopped in Chester for a VGIN Advisory Board meeting. The VAS has once again raised concerns about the procurement of services for statewide aerial mapping of the Commonwealth. The RFP does not specify that the work shall be done under the supervision of a Licensed Surveyor. The interests of VAS were well represented by Doug Richmond and John Palatiello. The decision of the Board was for a joint panel consisting of VAS, VITA & APELSCIDLA to request an opinion from the Attorney General as to whether the services being provided fall under the definition of Land Surveying.

I have more trips planned for the remainder of the year and I hope to see many of you at your local chapter meetings.
From the Executive Director's Desk

John Palatiello, VAS

The Virginia Association of Surveyors continues to implement programs, initiatives and improvements to make the association more responsive to the members, more effective as an advocate for surveyors in Virginia, and to enhance the professional image of surveying in the Commonwealth.

The Board of Directors met in Waynesboro, VA on June 25 and took several substantive actions.

First and foremost, Amy Cannon of our staff provided a preview of the new website, which has now been launched. This is a major step forward for VAS, providing improved communication, and enhanced image, better functionality, more robust content, and a vibrant and easy-to-use e-commerce capability for dues payment, event registration, and other member transactions with the association.

The Strategic Plan (link) was adopted. This provides a “roadmap” of priorities, improvements, goals and objectives to guide the association for the coming years. Work will now begin on an implementation plan and benchmarks for measuring progress. A tip of the hat goes to these members who participated in a session last November that provided valuable input into the drafting of the plan - Chuck Dunlap, Steve Douty, Doyle Allen, Will Nash, Ed Dodd, Michael Starling, Steve Stephenson, David Holland, Doug Richmond, Dave Gardy, John Sehl, Bruce Frederick, Kevin Shreiner, and Gary Faulhaber.

The Board voted to request from APELSCIDLA/DPOR an opinion as to whether a 4-year degree pre-requisite for licensure as a surveyor requires legislation or can be implemented by APELSCIDLA/DPOR by regulation. That request has been submitted to the licensing board.

The Board also voted to request of the VGIN Board that an item be on the agenda at its meeting in July on the VGIN statewide mapping contract and its failure to comply with the requirement for performance by a VA surveyor or surveyor-photogrammetrist, or specific disclaimer on maps on intended and prohibited use, as advised by APELSCIDLA/DPOR, and the use of price competition rather than professional services selection.

The next VAS Board meeting is Saturday, September 17 at the Kirkley Hotel in Lynchburg, VA, preceded by a seminar on Friday, September 16. I hope to see you there for two days of education, networking, information-exchange, and efforts to improve to surveying profession. And mark your calendar now for the 69th Annual VAS General Membership Meeting and Convention to be held January 25 – 29 at the Hyatt Regency Dulles, Herndon, VA.

Member Spotlight: Kevin Shreiner

Kevin Shreiner, LS, PS, CFM; Surveying Manager, Triad Engineering
Role at VAS: Second Vice President

I originally joined VAS in 2000 as a student member, while in my second year of the Adult Apprenticeship Program at Woodson HS in Fairfax. I attended many of the VAS functions even before I was licensed, because I knew that one day I wanted to be a Board member and Executive Officer. I became a member of the Bull Run Chapter while I was living in Culpeper and helped organize the meetings, then became VP of that Chapter.

I started working for a surveyor right of High School in PA. I learned the old school way, with a 300’ steel chain, brass instrument with a wheel, magnifying class to read the angles and a plumb bob on a string. It was a great experience, although I didn’t appreciate it until years later. I moved to VA in 1984 after the death of my Father, and started working for an engineering firm in Fairfax. When someone discovered that I could draw really well, they made me come inside and hand-draft engineering plans, which I did for 6-8 years. But surveying was
always what I loved to do, so I slowly steered myself in that direction. My mentor was John L. Marshall, LSB, whom I worked with for 14 years. He taught me so much about this business that I wouldn’t be where I am today without him.

What I like most about surveying is the variety of work I get to do. Each week has a new challenge, and I think the dynamics of this business are fascinating. You literally never stop learning. The best surveyor, in my opinion, is an open-minded surveyor. Too many of us are set in our ways and not open to the new technological advances and dynamics of the work.

For anyone, particularly young people, who are considering engineering or surveying as a career, I would ask them to consider surveying. It is a myth to think that surveyors cannot have as lucrative of a career as an engineer. Professional surveyors are compensated well for what they do, and they perform a unique and necessary function in this industry. Pursuing a surveying career will keep you away from calculus too!

Anyone who is new to VAS should get involved with the organization at all levels. Don’t just pay your dues and never participate. I can give numerous examples of how valuable it is to make contacts with other surveyors across the State. We are competitors on some levels, but we are all colleagues as well. I consider professional surveyors to be an elite club of very smart individuals who perform a specific and difficult task that everyone in the development industry should appreciate.

It is a privilege to be an Executive Officer of VAS. I believe in this organization and I believe in what we do as an industry. For many years, I have aspired to be VAS President, and I look forward to the challenges ahead.

Upcoming Events

It’s that time of year when the weather will soon begin to change, the children are heading back to school and you’re looking at your calendar and budget making priorities for your business and your professional development. In addition to registering for the Fall Seminar and attending your chapter meetings, now is the time to mark the Annual Convention on your calendar. Click below for more information on VAS upcoming events.

**September 9-10, 2016: VAS/NSPS CAMP-A-RAMA 2016**

**September 16-17, 2016: Fall Seminar and BOD meeting**

**January 26-27, 2016: 69th Annual VAS General Membership Meeting & Convention**

In Memoriam

Judy Sheridan Hite, age 73, of Mechanicsville, died on Friday, August 19, 2016. Judy retired as an executive secretary with the Virginia Association of Surveyors. She was preceded in death by her parents, Roy Lee and Margaret Sheridan. She is survived by her husband, Russell R. Hite; one son, Russ Hite and wife, Kerri-Lyn; one daughter, Kathy Caldwell and husband, David; one brother, Wayne Sheridan and wife, Gayle; and four grandchildren, Morgan, Sadie, Karsen and Casey. Condolences can be sent to:

Judy and Russell Hite
8572 Anderson Court
Mechanicsville, VA 23116
An Historical Read: Footprints

Erskine Proffitt, LS

When the VAS membership was tasked with providing articles about one of our own who is enjoying retirement I thought of Mr. Proffitt. I have known Erskine since I first moved to Lynchburg in 1993 when I began employment at Hurt and Proffitt P.C. He is well known throughout central Virginia in his partnership with Charles F. Hurt providing topnotch surveying and civil engineering services.

Erskine has been calling Lynchburg his hometown since his birth in 1931. After finishing school he decided to enlist in the Naval Reserve and initially served four years. While in the Naval Reserve a friend suggested he check with the Virginia Department of Highways (VDH) about surveying opportunities advertised. He was hired by Bill Harper at the Highway Department to work on a survey crew in 1951 and worked there for 3 years. With his highway training in construction and surveying the time came when Erskine decided to re-enlist but this time with the SEABEES. The SEABEES are part of the US Naval Construction Forces. During this time the Highway Department wanted to send Erskine to Newport News to work but he had a pregnant wife at home. Even though he enjoyed his work and those he worked with he and Judy did not want to move. So he decided to move on with his surveying career in Lynchburg.

In 1954 a new land surveyor by the name of William Massie Warrick was getting started in Lynchburg. Erskine worked for him between 1954 and 1959. During that time he obtained his VA surveyor license in 1956. In the summer of 1959 Erskine started his own surveying business out of his home. He would later move into his former employer’s old office and employed 1 or 2 people. Like any small surveying business Erskine spent a lot of time working both in the field and in the office. He obtained most of his surveying equipment from Southern Photo out of Greensboro. He borrowed some money from his sister to make equipment purchases such as a survey chain, transit, plumb bobs and pen sets for freehand drawn plats.

When asked about challenges to land surveying in those days he mentioned the same hurdles as today… weather, terrain, and local officials. He said that another challenge was employing “good” people and then keeping them.

In 1973 he joined forces with Mr. Hurt. He said that he and Charlie Hurt had worked together on many projects and said that it was a good match. It was through that great working relationship together that they decided to create Hurt & Proffitt. Their office was in downtown Lynchburg on Church Street. Together they were about 7-8 people strong. Erskine would get various road projects and Charlie would do the plans and profiles. Erskine would then take the design plans and stake out the projects for construction. Business was good and Erskine said they had more work than they could handle… so they grew in size … in space and in people. They managed to stay up with the times with surveying and office equipment…. from hand drawn plats using a Leroy set to the latest versions of computer-aided drafting.
When asked about some interesting things in his surveying career he mentioned that he surveyed the property of what is now Smith Mountain Lake State Park. He mentioned that more than once he’s been asked by a property owner if he could help with the field work in order to save money. And more than once he’s had to deal with property owners’ emotions about their property boundaries. He mentioned that he once surveyed a property line that ended up passing through the living room of a house. He did not elaborate on how that one turned out. He did say that there was a lot of camaraderie among his fellow surveyors in the old days and it was not unusual for surveyors to share their survey information and experiences. Erskine mentioned many fun times on fishing trips with his surveying comrades. There have been many surveyors who have been or still are employees at Hurt and Proffitt that have been influenced by Erskine’s work ethic and knowledge of land surveying.

Erskine joined the Virginia Association of Surveyors around 1960 and was one of the early members of the Southern Chapter. He said that one of the chapter’s charter members Charles Kirkland was instrumental in his joining the VAS. Erskine requested and received retirement status within VAS in 1996 when he retired from surveying. Today Erskine resides with Judy his wife of 60 years near Huddleston, VA on their waterfront property at Smith Mountain Lake not too far from the State Park. He says that he loves the surveying profession but when asked if he ever had any inclination in his retirement to get back into it, he is quick to reply….. Naw. You’re right, Erskine, after 45 years it’s time to hang up the plumb bob and replace it with the fishing pole.

This article was written and shared with the permission of Erskine Proffitt, LS.

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