President’s Message

Michael Starling, Shoreline Surveyors

As this is what I anticipate to be my last message to the membership, via the Old Dominion Surveyor, as President, I wish to thank the members of the Board, along with all of the other VAS members who volunteered a considerable amount of time throughout the year to make 2016 successful for the VAS. While everyone’s efforts are appreciated, I would like to acknowledge a handful that, in my opinion, have really gone above and beyond the level of service that one would expect. Thank you, Chip Richardson. Chip has maintained our Educational Program since before I was a member of VAS. In 2016, VAS was able to provide a number of educational opportunities, not only to our members, but also our up-and-coming surveyors. Thank you to Will Nash and Bruce Frederick. Although their terms on the VAS Board have ended, they continue to attend almost every quarterly meeting, assist with legislative issues and have always been available whenever I had a question. Thank you, Alison Hanson. Alison has provided her time to support the Public Relations needs of the VAS. Alison has answered every call, fulfilled every request, and smiled through it all. Finally, thank you to Steve Douty. Steve has almost single handedly provided the energy behind the Workforce Development movement. His passion for the profession of land surveying is inspiring.

During the past 12 months, I was able to attend the annual conventions in Kentucky and Maryland. I enjoyed meeting the surveyors of those states and was proud to say that I represented the Virginia Association of Surveyors. I was also able to visit a handful of the VAS chapters for some of their meetings. The hospitality of those chapters was appreciated.

The 69th Annual Convention is just around the corner. There are a lot of exciting events and seminars planned. Please plan to attend and make your reservations early, so that you do not miss out on getting a room at the facility. Thank You Ed Dodd and the staff of JMP&A for the countless hours that you have dedicated to creating, what promises to be, an outstanding event. (Fingers crossed for no snow!)

The Holiday Season is here. I wish each of you a Merry Christmas. Whatever your faith, however you choose to celebrate the Holidays, I wish you all the best. I hope that you find that you, and your family have been blessed in 2016 and I pray for a peaceful and successful 2017.
Proposed Bylaws Change and General Membership Meeting

Pursuant to the VAS bylaws, notice was previously given that an Annual General Membership Meeting will be held at 8:00 AM on Saturday, January 28, 2017 at the Hyatt Regency Dulles Hotel in Herndon, during the annual convention. At this meeting, three bylaws amendments will be presented to the membership for consideration and approval:

ARTICLE I – MEMBERS

Add the following:

“1. i. TECHNICAL: A Technical Member is an individual, who has worked under the supervision of a Licensed Surveyor for a minimum of two years, with the intent of making a career in the field of Land Surveying. A Technical Member shall have no vote in the business of the Association. Each application shall be reviewed by the Board. Membership as a Technical Member is available only to those not otherwise covered under Student or Associate membership qualifications.”

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

At the end of the first sentence, strike “January” and replace with “April.”

ARTICLE IV – COMMITTEES

Add the following:

“3. A YOUNG SURVEYORS NETWORK COMMITTEE, consisting of all VAS members eligible for the NSPS Young Surveyors Network. The NSPS Young Surveyors are defined by surveyors aged 35 years or under, students of surveying or those surveyors within 10 years of graduating from a Bachelor or Master’s Degree. The said committee shall work cooperatively with and in conjunction with the Association with regard to all mutual interests. The Chairman of said committee shall be elected by its members at the Annual Meeting. The Chairman of said committee shall be invited to attend all Board of Directors meetings in an advisory capacity.”

In addition to the proposed changes to the bylaws, there will be a discussion of the education requirements for newly licensed land surveyors in Virginia, pursuant to 18VAC10-20-300 and 18VAC10-20-310 and whether such education requirements should be strengthened and enhanced.

Please plan to be in attendance at this important meeting. Register here today.

Election Deadline is this Friday

Members who are eligible to vote for the incoming VAS officers and directors were recently sent a ballot via email. Please be sure to cast your vote by the deadline of this Friday, December 23, 2016. New officers and directors will be installed at the 69th Annual Convention & General Membership Meeting to be held January 26-28, 2017 at the Hyatt Regency in Herndon, Virginia. If you did not receive the ballot, please email amy@vasurveyors.org. To attend the Annual Convention, please register today.
Please plan to join fellow surveyors and colleagues at the 69th Annual Convention and General Membership Meeting, January 26-28, in Herndon, VA. Here are some important things to remember:

- **Education sessions** are filling up – reserve your spot today!
- **Hotel reservations** must be made by January 12th to get the VAS group rate.
- **Plat competition** entries are due January 13th.
- The National Geodetic Survey is developing a new datum in 2022. A special session to brief the membership and discuss potential support for legislation that may be introduced to the VA General Assembly will take place Thursday, January 26, 2017 from 4:00 to 5:00 pm.
- Proposed bylaws changes, the installation of new officers and directors and other important association matters will take place at the General Membership Meeting. Be there to be sure your voice is heard.
- Some **sponsorships** are still available. Put your company in the spotlight.
- **Exhibit hall** space is filling up – select your booth today and showcase your company.

**Casino Night!**

We may not be Vegas, but we’re doing it up right!

So put on your bling,

For VAS Casino Night!

It’s time to bring your game face and join fellow surveyors and guests for a night of risk-free gambling and fun! Immediately following the Awards Banquet, join your VAS friends, colleagues, and spouses and try your luck in games of chance at a little "Las Vegas" style casino. Friday, January 27 at 9:00 pm. Register here.

**Member Spotlight: An Interview with Josh Sehl, Young Surveyors Network**

Tell me about your role in VAS. My role in the VAS is to try to spread awareness of the association. We will try to get the younger generation of surveyors to join and become part of the process. The position for the Young Surveyors Network within the VAS is relatively new. We are looking for some of the younger generation to start getting together and meeting to talk about what is going on in the profession. The average age of a surveyor in the state of Virginia is on the rise so our main goal is to try to find ways for the younger generation of surveyors to get involved.

How did you choose this career path? I have been around surveying my whole life. My father, John Sehl, has been a licensed land surveyor in the state of Virginia since the early 90s and has been involved in the VAS for as long as I can remember. I spent my high school vacations working out in the field getting a lot of useful experience. This led me to pursue a degree in surveying at East Tennessee State University.

What is your favorite thing about being a surveyor? My favorite part of being a surveyor is the adventure of following behind an old survey and recovering monuments that haven’t been seen in years. Surveyors are the first ones on a job site and usually the last to leave. Being part of helping a site go from acres of trees or fields to a bustling shopping center or neighborhood is a cool thing to experience.
What advice would you give to those entering the profession or who are new to VAS? My advice to someone coming into the surveying profession or the VAS is to listen to those around you. The current members of the VAS are a wealth of knowledge that needs to be utilized so we can continue to thrive and grow as a profession.

**NSPS Board adopts best practices guideline on privacy**

NSPS recognizes and supports the premise that every individual has the right to protect their personal data, including data that describes their “location”. The intertwined nature of how surveying and other geospatial and GIS data could impact citizen privacy and, and has been the focus of threatened regulation by a variety of Federal entities, the NSPS Board in March endorsed a best practices guideline, which is now published on the NSPS website. The purpose of the document is to assist members with how to collect, store, apply, or disseminate different types of geolocation information and when prior consent of the individual of whom it describes should be obtained. This guideline is intended to define best practices for surveyors to protect individual citizen personal privacy when handling geospatial data.

**Executive Director’s Column: A Year in Review**

*John Palatiello, VAS*

2016 was a successful year for VAS and 2017 promises to be even better. During the past year alone, here are a few of the association’s major accomplishments:

- Unveiled a new, modern logo
- Introduced a new, digital version of Old Dominion Surveyor
- Adopted the association’s first strategic plan
- Helped defeat a bill in the Virginia General Assembly that would have restricted surveyors’ right of entry on interstate pipeline projects
- Persuaded the APELSCIDLA Board to issue guidance protecting the scope of practice of surveyors from restrictive local government policies and ordinances
- Launched a new, profession association management based-website site
- Hosted a successful 68th Annual Convention and General Membership Meeting in Norfolk (despite a record blizzard throughout the Commonwealth!)
- Helped win an amendment in the General Assembly regarding proper use of Virginia State Plane Coordinates
- Persuaded the APELSCIDLA Board to issue guidance on surveyor and surveyor-photogrammetrist licensing and qualifications based selection on statewide mapping contracts
- Presented the John Foster School, to prepare future surveyors
- Initiated a Workforce Development initiative to recruit and attract the next generation of surveyors into careers in the profession, winning an endorsement from NSPS, as well and gaining support from the Virginia Department of Education
- Established a Young Surveyors Committee
- Hosted seminars on Ownership Transition, Business Management, Geodetic Control Surveys and Surveyors' Successful Tree Identification
- Administered Trigstar competitions
- Presented an Exam Preparation class
- Establish an affiliation with the American Association for Geodetic Surveyors (AAGS)
- Hosted the annual Plat competition
- Promoted the surveying profession at the Hampton Roads Transportation Career Expo
- Launched VAS on Twitter
- Secured a National Surveyors Week proclamation for Virginia from Governor McAuliffe
Presented surveying as a career to homeschoolers
Established an OPUS observation at the burial site of Judy Hite
With the economy improving, 2017 will bring new opportunities and activities. Among them:
VAS is hoping to have legislation introduced in the General Assembly to close the loophole that permits unlicensed photogrammetry
A full 69th Annual Convention and General Membership Meeting is planned for January 26-28 in Herndon, Virginia
Work will begin on possible legislation to adopt the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS) 2022 in Virginia, to upgrade from NAD 27 and 83
Quarterly education seminars are planned for April 21 in Newport News, June 23 in Roanoke, and September 15 in Northern Virginia (Mount Vernon Chapter).

The VAS Board is also reviewing education requirements to become a licensed surveyor in Virginia. Member input will be sought during the General Membership Meeting on January 28. Here are a few points to consider. In Virginia, education requirements for licensure are not specified in law. Rather, those prerequisites are determined by the Board for Architects, Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, Certified Interior Designers and Landscape Architects (APELSCIDLA Board) and set forth by regulations in the Virginia Administrative Code. The education requirements for surveyors in Virginia have not changed since 1991; that’s 25 years. In recent years, Americans in general have become much better educated. In 1978, 70 percent of Americans had a high school diploma or less and 16 percent had college degrees. By 1996, the gap had narrowed to 52 and 24, respectively. Today, 41 percent have a high school diploma or less and 33 percent have college degrees. The study that produced these data did not look at people with some post-high-school education but no college degree, which includes more than a quarter of Americans. According to the U.S. Department of Education, between 1990 and 2014, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds to receive at least a high school diploma or its equivalent increased from 86 to 91%. During that same time period, 25- to 29-year-olds who had attained a Bachelor’s or higher degree has also increased. A study recently reported in The Washington Post found that white males without a college degree fell behind economically. In 1996, white males aged 25-26 with only a high school diploma earned $32,677. By 2014, that number rose to $38,803. However, white males aged 25-26 who were college graduates had income that rose from $40,487 in 1996 to $94,252 in 2014.

NSPS and its predecessor, ACSM, has had a policy in support for a four-year-degree requirement for licensure as a surveyor since the 1980s. Today, fewer than half the states have a four-year-degree requirement without an option for licensure through less education, experience, or a combination thereof. As Americans have become better educated, more earn a college degree, and incomes rise, education and income has not kept pace. VAS will have a discussion on an education policy to assure that surveying continues to be recognized as a profession and the future workforce is prepared for tomorrow’s job market.

I respectfully urge you to be an active member of VAS in 2017, attend our convention and seminars, be part of the discussion, and help build an even better surveying profession in the Commonwealth.

The Staff and Board of Directors of VAS wish you and yours a happy and joyous holiday season.