In condolence and support of our fellow Virginians in Virginia Beach, the VAS Board approved and staff processed a $500 contribution to the Virginia Beach Tragedy Fund, created and partnered by the City of Virginia Beach and the United Way of South Hampton Roads. The Tidewater Chapter board also voted to make a matching $500 contribution. If you are interested in helping the families of the victims of this tragedy please click here.

Summer Seminar and Board Meeting Recap

On Friday, June 21st Justin Klein of Klein Agency, LLC discussed liability traps and Dr. Qassim Abdullah of Woolpert, Inc. spoke on data quality and
Scholarships Available - Apply Today!

Are you planning to attend the John Foster School in July? Do you have an employee, co-worker or colleague who will attend? Or just need some assistance in your current surveying courses. Apply today for the many different scholarship opportunities we have available......Click here

Warren Boundary Line Dispute

The Frederick County Board of Supervisors may not be willing to adjust the county line to accommodate property owners who had believed for decades that they lived in Warren County.

The disputed area is along Foster Hollow Road east of Middletown and is comprised of seven parcels on about 20 acres. A recent survey by Marsh and Legge PLC, coupled with data from Frederick County's GIS map, confirmed the parcels are on Frederick's side of its boundary with Warren County.

Information on the property deeds for the seven parcels was inaccurate or incomplete when filed, Frederick County Deputy Administrator Jay Tibbs said, leading the property owners to believe their land was in Warren County.

As a result, Tibbs wrote in a report submitted to Frederick supervisors at their meeting on Wednesday night, "The properties are currently being taxed in Warren County, the residents of the affected parcels vote in Warren County, receive services from Warren County, and their children have attended school in Warren County."

Last year, Warren County Registrar Carol Tobin realized that people in the Foster Hollow Road area may be voting in the wrong congressional district - Warren is in the 6th District and Frederick is in the 10th - which prompted a review of the boundary line.

Once it was determined the seven parcels were in Frederick County, a meeting to discuss possible solutions was held on Feb. 28 with the affected property owners and officials from both counties. Click here to read more

Experience Works
Alison Hanson and Stephen Letchford (pictured left) informed high school career counselors about advising students to pursue a career in surveying at the VA Department of Education "Experience Works" conference in Richmond.

Editor's View

Greetings Fellow Surveyors.

I hope this note finds everyone busy and enjoying the sunshine. We certainly needed the break from all the rain. Of course, with the sunshine comes the heat, so remember the importance of staying hydrated. (My friendly safety tip for the month, check out the new "Safety Corner" in this month's ODS).

As I mentioned in the prior edition of ODS, one of my priorities this year will be to work on Workforce Development efforts for our profession. I am pleased to tell you all that together with Stephen Letchford and John Palatiello, we attended the "Experience Works - A Convening of Business Leaders & Educators" as a business and industry exhibitor, on June 19 hosted by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). This is my first year participating, but VAS has been a part in this event the last three years. Conference participants had the opportunity to learn the knowledge, skills, and training Career & Technical Education (CTE) students need in order to be successful; and about the job, career, and Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities available to them in the profession of surveying.

Along these same lines, I will once again be assisting Chip Richardson in July with the John Foster Exam Review Class in Richmond. I am asking all members to please consider sending any employee you may have working for you who is preparing for his or her test. As a past attendee, I highly recommend this to anyone who is considering taking either the FS or PS exam. This is also an important opportunity to stress the importance of membership in the VAS and talk to our future members!! And while I have this opportunity, I would like to give a BIG thank you to the instructors!!! Without your efforts and time, these classes would not be possible!!!

Planning of the 2021 Convention continues with VAS staff and this week I plan to attend a meeting with Kevin Wood and Chip Richardson to walk through the 2020 hotel accommodations. I am attending this meeting to make sure I understand all the nuances of booking the right hotel to make sure I plan a convention that meets our needs and makes all those that attend enjoy their time, be it in the class room or at the social events.

I am continuing my appeal to you, the members of VAS, Chapter Officers and fellow readers for articles, events, and news. Your contributions to this publication are greatly encouraged and appreciated.

Respectfully yours,
Membership

The 2019 VAS membership year is well underway. If you have not renewed for 2019, please do so as soon as possible to continue your membership benefits. Please make sure your profile information on the VAS website is up to date, as that is the main communication tool we use to contact you. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact the VAS office at 844-414-1466.

Investigating Career Opportunities (ICO) Real People - Real Answers: By Matthias Strecker

On Tuesday, April 9th Bryan Wilson and I had the opportunity to represent Land Surveying as a profession at the Investigating Career Opportunities (ICO) Real People - Real Answers event hosted by Woodson HS, Fairfax, VA.

This was the first time I had the privilege to participate at a career fair and my experience is just a snapshot of impressions - it will not be exemplary of all such fairs all over Virginia. I am writing this article hoping that other Land Surveyors, seasoned and licensed or novice alike will answer calls for professionals to participate at events like these.

At Woodson HS we were one of forty-two featured professions and trades ranging from Social Worker to Plumbing/HVAC Technician to Aerospace Engineer, bringing a variety of displays, gear and promotional gimmicks. At last year's fair the surveyor's table and our exhibit Trimble Robotic Instrument were located in a tight space near one of the entrances. The clumps of chatting students who were rushing in and out of the venue kept Bryan on his toes, fearing for the safety of our precious gear, whenever sneakered feet seemed to miss the tripod by inches. This time we were reaping the benefits of a request for more space and had a better location.

At check-in with HS administration we were provided with an inkpad and a stamp. If students showed interest and asked questions we rewarded them with a stamp in their career fair booklet. Students could later claim door prizes based on their stamp collection. In addition to the provided table we had three banner stands to attract attention, an old total station, a set of construction plans and VAS and NSPS promotional flyers and other materials.

Students were released upon us in three waves and even the standard question: "What do surveyors do?" posed a conundrum: How to explain a diverse job, with such a broad spectrum of skills and tasks to kids with an attention span of three seconds? Additionally, surveying is an abstract concept that seems incomprehensible to a generation that is used to having data on any subject available on moment's notice. That someone needs to collect and process that data, plan land use/development, or support the construction of highways and buildings did not seem to crossed many minds.
We took the initiative to engage the students in dialogue and had good conversations about our profession. The banners showing various aspects of our work were very helpful, we could point at pictures and give a progressive description on how a project moves along. The banners gave a good witness to the diversity of tasks and environments that surveyors face. Some of the students made the connection between our work and how it relates to what they had seen at the "Architect" and "Construction Management" tables at the fair.

A topic of interest was the entrance requirements to get started as a surveyor. We had a basic chart to show the different classic roles in Land Surveying starting at Rodman and ending at Licensed Land Surveyor, showing the dual tracks of office and field positions. Another point that seemed to resonate with our audience was the prospect that a college degree was not mandatory to get to the top of the profession, though it was understood that it would make progress easier.

We enjoyed the experience and feel that we gave a good account of our profession. While we kindled interest for it, our visit to the job fair left Bryan and me to contemplate how we would do better next time.

Here are our observations:

Promotional material:
- The little foam safety cones we had as giveaways were a great hit
- The plastic bags were coveted as students carried a lot of material from various tables
- The NSPS flyer is well designed and very useful

Things to improve on:
- Have Banners that show logical project progression from field topo to office terrain model to plats to stake-out to as-builts in prominent locations for easy pointing.
- Have a laptop with a short video showing typical tasks.
- Include a female representative, there was a gender bias.
- Have a drone, even if we can't fly it at the fair, it will attract attention.
Hydration Safety

Hot and humid conditions make illnesses like heat stress a high probability for workers. Staying hydrated is a key component to preventing heat-related illness.

Hydration Safety Checklist

1. Check the heat index.
2. Drink small amounts of cool water often.
3. Take more frequent breaks depending on the heat index.

Here are some recommendations for employee hydration from OSHA:

- **SET UP A BUDDY SYSTEM**
  enable workers to look for signs of heat stress in each other

- **MAINTAIN CLEAR COMMUNICATION**
  Designate a leader to remind employees to keep hydrated and to make sure they are drinking water.

- **PROVIDE THE PROPER PPE**
  Make sure employees have access to cooling vests, reflective clothing, or cool mist stations.

Electrolytes

In terms of hydration, electrolytes are responsible for directing water (and nutrients) to the areas of the body where its needed most and maintaining optimal fluid balance inside the cells.

Electrolyte powder is available in most drug stores as an alternative to sugary sports drinks and can be added to water.

Sources:

Calendar of Events
Honored to be in the footsteps of giants

A Footsteps interview with Stephen Letchford

Stephen Letchford, LS, is Survey Manager with AES Consulting Engineers and is Region II Director of VAS

Q. Tell us a little about yourself, something that you feel brought you to surveying as well as something that surveyors around the Commonwealth who will be reading this may find interesting and unique.

A. First of all, I must admit I was flattered to have been asked by the ODS to share some of my foot steps for those who may read this and can only hope those same readers find my experiences both interesting and worthy of the giants within the profession who have come before me.

In answer to your first question, however, I must admit that I may be one of the very few surveyors that I have met in my 30+ years who actually knew he wanted to be a surveyor from a very early age.

Let me take you back a few years to the ripe old age of 12. Whilst attending Barton House Crammer, a school for boys entering the English boarding school system, in a very small village in the eastern end of the county of Devon, England, I was introduced to a member of the Ordinance Survey Department (basically the UK version of NGS and USGS), when this chap had stopped by the school for a career day. Now you must understand, from an even earlier age, I had always enjoyed art and was an avid orienteer or "Yomper" as my Royal Marine father would say, so in my spare time I would enlarge OS Maps "for fun", I was a very weird kid. It was during one of these "map enlarging sessions" that the chap from the OS walked over and announced to everyone in the classroom that I was obviously to be a cartographer!

Now it took me about another 3 years to find out what a cartographer actually was, but from that point on, I knew in my heart of hearts I was to be a map maker, aka a surveyor.

Before finishing my "A" levels in Math, Physics, and Geography, I landed my first job as a surveyor. In England surveyors are Chartered by the queen rather than licensed by the state. Surveyors, on the English side of the pond, are tasked with a few additional responsibilities then their American cousins. These include the valuation of properties, cadastral surveying, construction oversight &
management, and even the buying and selling of homes.

My first job was working with a Royal Institution of Charter Surveyors (RICS) Valuation Surveyor whose job it was to inspect English pubs in and around the south west of England. As you can probably imagine, this is a position I have been searching for ever since.

Every pub owner wished the surveyor who came to value his business to "appreciate" why his pub was more valuable than the next and that often involved the sampling of his homemade beers. Needless to say, this young survey in training, found many pubs of great value throughout the southwest of England during that time.

After wrapping up my schooling in the UK, my father, a colonel in the Royal Marines, received orders to ship over to the US and command the UK contingent of NATO's combined SACLANT forces in Norfolk, Virginia. As I had not accepted my commission to the Royal Engineers, more specifically the "Sappers", I decided to see what the "Good Old US of A" had to offer.

So, after hitching a lift on a much delayed indulgence (aka MAC) flight out of RAF Lakeheath, a flight that was delayed because of the shuttle explosion on Jan 28, 1986. I arrived in Charleston, SC on Feb 1, 1986 and promptly got into the "wrong" side of a yellow cab who was waiting to take me across town. Obviously, the cabbie had seen this all before and he kindly asked that I get into the "American" side of the car so we could head out. I eventually made it to Norfolk, Virginia, much, much later that same day to a dad who declared "about time you got here". Imagine planes, trains and automobiles with an Englishman in tow and you'll get the picture.

I was a young English lad, fresh out of college, staying with parents who had rented a large American home off Great Neck Road in Virginia Beach. I had no income, no car and a dad who made it abundantly clear that it was now my turn to earn a living and to pay my own way. He did make note that, temporarily at least, there would be a safe place to stay each night but the rest was up to me.

I did want any enterprising young English lad would do, who had no ideas about the legalities of working on this side of the pond. I walked to the closet pizza joint that was Milton's Pizza on the north end of Great Neck Road at the time, right opposite what I believe is still the Corner Market, and asked the owner for a job. After Richard, the owner, asked a few questions about who my parents were, what dad was doing over here and how long I intended to stay, I was hired on the spot. The very next day I worked lunch and dinner & cleared $80 in tips. I was rich I tell you.

About a year later, having enjoyed all the medium pizzas I could eat, I met the love of my life, Ruth A. Coffin ("yes, just like the box" - her dad's quote not mine). At first she was not too keen on this fast spoken Devonian lad but she did introduce me to her parents, so I took that as a good sign. After she finally began to understand my rather strong Devonian drawl, we were married in later June of 1988 and have been together ever since. Ruth and I have two great kids, Elizabeth and Joseph.

With the impending birth of my daughter, I soon realized that I would need
something called health insurance, for on this side of the pond it actually cost huge sums of money to have a baby so this is really where the survey adventure in the U.S. of A began.

One morning I was reading the Virginia Pilot and noted a help wanted advertisement placed by, Langley & McDonald. They were asking for something called a "survey rod man". Not wanting to seem foolish as asked a friend if that was anything like a cartographer. His response was that is exactly what it was (oh if I had only known) so off I went in my 1977 Toyota Celica (if I had only known how much that bucket of bolts would be worth today) to an interview with Mr. Ed White, LS. thank heavens, he saw something he liked in me and hired me on the spot. He wisely placed me with Peter Marshall, my very first crew chief.

Peter Marshall, Steve Tolison, LS, and Howie Spence, LS, were the firms "rock stars". I know this because they used to tell me that EVERY DAY of the work week right before telling me to say something in "that funny accent of mine".

I will always be extremely grateful to Ed White because he placed me with a survey crew chief who took the time, each and every day, to teach me how things worked in this great profession of ours; from computing everything one needed to layout a car park (aka parking lot) to a flat (aka a condo) to a curved pavement (aka sidewalk) all on the back of an 11c that he insisted I purchase from Best Products on Independence Blvd. using $50 from my very first pay check; an 11c, I might add, that I still use to this day.

Other things Pete taught me; all those surveyor shortcuts around traffic in the city of Virginia Beach that I still use to this day when I am fed up with all the stop and go traffic along Virginia Beach Blvd., to where surveyors ACTUALLY go when it's raining on a Wednesday, and how to mask the smell of a BUCSH Beer with a stick or two of BIG RED because you never wished to smell like a brewery when finally back at the office for the day.

**Q. Who were your mentors?**

A. Over the last 30 years I have worked with many of you who are reading this right now, suffice it to say, I will be forever grateful to all of those colleagues who have had a part in helping this English man become part of the surveying community here in Virginia and for a few fingers of good single malt and a splash of cold water, I may even tell you a few stories of the likes of John Ballard, LS, Robert (Bert) Kennedy, LS (RIP my friend), Judy Beale LS (love my Judy hugs), Paige Cockrell LS, Hayden Frye LS and all the founding members of the Eagle Point Users group (we were such nerds), Paul Michael, LS, Tommy Wilson, LS, Charlie Rice, LS, Mark McGonigle, LS and a few others who will remain nameless.

**Q. Then What?**

A. Eventfully I found my way to Richmond in 1999, a city that is now, very much my home. I am proud to say that I obtained my surveyors license in 2003 while working on some of the biggest projects in the greater Richmond area at that time. However, what made it even sweeter was to have my parents visiting from
the UK that Christmas when the notice came in from DPOR that I had passed and was now licensed to practice the profession I had grown to love and respect.

Q. What do you most enjoy about being a surveyor?

A. I enjoy being anywhere outside, whether a project takes me to Puerto Rico or the Mississippi Delta, but most especially when that "anywhere" is west of Charlottesville, perhaps on a farmstead somewhere in Green County, cutting out a rural boundary. I especially enjoy helping land owners resolve boundary issue like gentlemen. I enjoy finding ways to help keep our Commonwealth of Virginia Green. I enjoy my stream preservation efforts and land conservation easement work. I enjoy helping that new land owner find their way through a county's rules and regs. But, most of all, I enjoy being able to lean on those friendships that have grown over time with membership within the VAS, to help an attorney friend achieve a result he was told was not possible in the time their client needed it.

Q. Mr. Letchford where do you see yourself in 10 years?

A. Working to live and not the other way around! For too long we, as a profession, spend so much of our time slogging through the daily grind of deadline after deadline, hoping to ensure our families are well taken care of. There never seems to be enough time to stop and simply "smell the roses", my hope is that in ten years I have found a way to smell all those roses.

I would also like to be in a position to be able to take my wife to the UK a little more often to see family on "my side of the pond" and not just a Christmas night flight to Heathrow because its $1000 less than the summertime fare. My wife, Ruth, made it abundantly clear, the last time we traveled, that she would really like to head back to the UK during a time of the year when the sun stays up past 3:00 in the afternoon.

Q. How can we encourage those younger folks looking to the survey profession as a career path?

A. I mentioned my children earlier. My son landed a job with Google in San Francisco. I posed a similar question to him earlier this week and his response surprised me somewhat. I trust where he is coming from because of the firm he works for and what that particular group does with internet data for their own corporate needs. My son told me to stop worrying about the millennials, if you don't have them already you have lost them forever and you should stop wasting your time. His advice was that we should be concentrating our efforts on generation "Z" or as others have named them, the "boot strap" generation. We need to concentrate our efforts on those young men and women who are looking to leave high school in the next few years and who are choosing not to be burdened with the debt of higher education. After a little research of my own, I now somewhat agree with his assessment.

With this in mind I am very proud of the involvement the VAS has had over the years in both middle and high schools throughout the Commonwealth and in my opinion, it needs to continue, if not expand significantly.
Q. Thanks for taking time to chat with us today. Is there anything else you would like to add before we sign off?

A. Yes, there is, the VAS will not survive without the involvement of its members. If you are at a Chapter meeting, offer to help. If you feel the call to serve, let one of your board members know. There is always room for a willing volunteer. For those of you who have stepped up, I know I speak for the rest of the VAS Board when I say your efforts are appreciated and commended. But don't stop there. Look around your offices, ask who you might bring to that next chapter meeting, and help spark an interest in our association among the next generation of leaders within our profession.

For those that have come to up to me, or members of my staff, with the occasional "I know that British guy" when we are working around the state or attending a local chapter meeting, keep them coming, it is appreciated.

Keep doing what you do to make our association & our profession stronger every day. If you have an issue, bring it forward, share it with your chapter, your region, or your state board member. We can't act if we don't know there is an issue affecting our membership.

Best regards to one and all
Stephen C. Letchford, LS # 2772

A truly appreciative survey of those who have walked before me.
Recruit a Member

Did you know that when you recruit a new member to VAS you will receive a 25% discount on your own membership dues? Spread the word about the great work VAS is doing for the surveying profession and be sure to tell the new member to include your name on the "recommended" by portion of their application.

Read More

In Memoriam
Our condolences to the family of Thomas Francis Conlon, Jr. who passed away on June 5, 2019. Tom was a member of VAS and the Mount Vernon Chapter. He will be missed by his family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family request donations to the [Children's Heart Foundation](#).

To read more about Tom's incredible life, [click here](#).

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**Do you know a fellow VAS surveyor who has passed away? Would you like to recognize them in the monthly newsletter? Please email Khea Adams the information at Khea@vasurveyors.org**

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**Order Your VAS Apparel**

VAS is pleased to work with Land's End to provide an opportunity to purchase quality clothing with the VAS logo embroidered on it. Go on, showcase your membership in VAS. To start shopping and place your order, [Click Here](#)

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**New Job Announcements**

Would you like to post a job on the VAS career board? Members can advertise job openings. Job posting cost is $25 per ad, posted for 30 days.

[Click Here to View Job Openings](#)!