



The Cornerpost

Journal of the Vermont Society of Land Surveyors
Volume 56, Number 1 | Spring 2025

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Vermont Society of Land Surveyors
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SEND IN YOUR NEWS

The success of *The Cornerpost* depends on contributions from all of our members. Please consider submitting something for an upcoming issue. Send your articles, news and photographs to birgit@vsls.org. All ideas are welcome!



ON THE COVER

This month's cover photo comes from VSLs President Randy Otis. The scene is undoubtedly familiar to any surveyor working in Vermont in the winter — a Leica Robotic total station standing in a clearing of snow in the woods. It's certainly representative of this year's traditional winter season.

Send your photo for the cover. If you've snapped a photo in your travels that you think would look good for the cover of *The Cornerpost*, please send it to birgit@vsls.org. We're always happy to feature scenes from different parts of the state.

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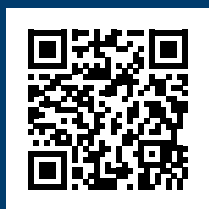
PRESIDENT'S CORNER



We're now accepting applications for the 2025 VLS Education Foundation Scholarship

Award: up to \$3,000
Application due: June 1, 2025

Designed for students who are about to graduate from a land or geodetic surveying program, including online and in person. If you know someone who may qualify, take a photo of the QR code below for more information, or go to vsls.org/scholarship.



SPRING SHOULD BE UPON US SOON, and it's always good to have a change of seasons to bring fresh perspective as the flowers bloom. Speaking of the spring, VLS has been collaborating with the New Hampshire Land Surveyors Association (NHLSA) to set up a joint meeting on Friday, March 28 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

These joint meetings are always a good opportunity to collaborate with our colleagues in other states to see what challenges they're dealing with, and to

seasoned staff trying to connect with the younger folks, as well as for the younger folks. There is a social with drinks and snacks, and we should have a speaker tuned in to concerns of the younger staff, as well as the panel discussion.

With a focus on the younger folks, I would like to remind everyone that VLS has a scholarship fund that I would encourage people to apply for. The scholarship award is up to \$3,000, but it has not been awarded in a while due to a lack of applications. Please encourage anyone you

“These joint meetings are always a good opportunity to collaborate with our colleagues in other states to see what challenges they're dealing with, and to learn about ideas they've implemented in their home state to try and improve things for all.”

learn about ideas they've implemented in their home state to try and improve things for all. I encourage everyone to attend, as these joint meetings don't happen too often. I also want to take a line to thank NHLSA board members for their efforts in pulling this together with VLS leadership. I understand these things are hard to coordinate and takes valuable time away from our busy schedules, so THANK YOU.

As part of the joint effort with NHLSA, we're working with the young surveyors to set up a New England panel discussion on the challenges of getting younger people into surveying and establishing an active group for the younger folks to take part in. With this in mind, please encourage your younger staff to attend the joint conference so they can be part of the conversation.

A lot of effort behind the scenes has gone into putting together an afternoon that would be beneficial both for the

know who would be eligible to look into this and get an application in, so that we can recognize a student working towards the survey profession.

As a friendly reminder while on the paperwork front, please check on your membership status, renew if needed, and if you can get additional staff to become members I encourage you to do so. There is a lot of value to being a member of VLS, from the networking and training, to just supporting the profession through representation. Every new member helps the bottom line, which helps to keep membership rates low for everyone.

With that said, I hope to see you all in the spring, and enjoy the warmer weather to come. Keep pushing to grow the industry, and thank you for your efforts. 🌱

Randy Otis, LS

VLS PRESIDENT



MARK YOUR CALENDAR • VT/NH JOINT MEETING
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Spring Meeting Coming Up in the D.C. Area

The NSPS Spring Business Meeting will be held in Silver Spring, Md., from March 19–21, with Day on the Hill preceding it on the 18th. This year the topic I will be discussing with the Vermont delegates will be the importance of keeping licensure for surveyors.

The student competition will be taking place March 18–20. There are a total of 24 teams, and the competition comprises two parts:

DAY 1: MONUMENT HUNT The first portion of the competition will be a staged scavenger hunt type event. A list of D.C.-area monuments are assigned a point value and provided the day before the event. The ones farther away or more logistically challenging are assigned higher values due to the risk of finding fewer. Monuments will be older and have significance to the history of surveying in the area.

DAY 2: MEASUREMENT EXERCISES The second portion of the competition will be the evaluation of students’ technical ability while requiring some knowledge of historical concepts. This will be a four-part exercise. Transportation and equipment will be provided. The basics of the four separate portions are: Route Layout, Traverse, Triangulation, and Boundary Reconnaissance.

In other news, I would like to congratulate new NSPS Treasurer Patti Brooks from New York and Vice President Jeff Clendenning, and thanks to all our members who voted.

I will be happy to talk to anyone about the NSPS Spring Business Meeting at the VSLs VT/NH Joint Spring Meeting – see you there!!



NSPS reps will meet with lawmakers on March 18.

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Vermont Explores Changes to the Administrative Rules for Surveying

While the process has just begun, the rules changes would eventually expand the pathways to licensure for land surveyors in our state.



The Administrative Rules that Vermont Licensed Land Surveyors practiced under were last revised in 2013. Those rules made a significant leap forward in the process by which applicants have been evaluated for licensure. With the movement away from simply counting hours to a portfolio process, the board had the ability to conclusively see the advancement and experience obtained as the applicant furthered their career.

Now it is time to look at the rules again.

"The number of surveyors being licensed across the nation is still lagging behind the need society presents for them, so the question is, how can we facilitate the path toward licensure to accommodate that growing need without sacrificing the protection of the public?"

Twelve years later, the profession has seen many advancements in technology, lower numbers of surveyors being licensed, and hurdles that have inadvertently been placed in front of those who seek licensure when their path does not follow the NCEES Model Surveyor's profile.

While the 2013 rules change regarding education requirements tried to sway the preference regarding degrees to only Survey ABET endorsed degrees, this left out many who had similar degrees in Engineering, GIS, and Forestry. The current rules place those with a graduate degree in a similar discipline at the same level as someone who doesn't have a degree at all. Both require 6 years of experience, regardless of the degree.

From 1991 through 2013 the Rules contained pathways for those with comparable degrees to obtain accredited survey classes to bolster the education element and still elevate them above the no-degree options.

Furthermore, most are aware that the number of surveyors being licensed across the nation is still lagging behind the need society

BY JOE FLYNN, LS

presents for them, so the question is, how can we facilitate the path toward licensure to accommodate that growing need without sacrificing the protection of the public? In short, it's re-evaluating the educational requirements and offering other pathways for those who take a more unconventional route to becoming a licensed land surveyor.

John Diebold, L.S., Professor at Vermont State University (formerly Vermont Tech), and current board chair, has taken the great initiative to draft new rules for multiple pathway towards licensure. While they are only in their infancy, they offer glimpses of the 1991 rules and also incorporate new situations that are becoming increasing prevalent due to the changes in learning since covid.

While the process of weaving this though the profession, the Office of Professional Regulations (OPR) and the always challenging legislature, it's great that it has begun. At the December 2024 LS board meeting, OPR liked the premise that the changes open doors for the public and reduces barrier to licensure. The implementation timeline is not immediate, but we should begin reviewing this as a profession and vetting items that we deem important.

So, lets get involved! Read the proposed changes, formulate sound opinions, communicate any other items that impose barriers to those seeking licensure and when OPR is read for input from the association, we will be ready! 🌍

Send your feedback about the changes to:
Joe Flynn: vermontls714@gmail.com
Mark Day: mark@dlsvt.com

Summary of Proposed Rules Changes

The following changes to the Administrative Rules of the Board of Land Surveyors are meant to reduce barriers for those wishing to pursue a land surveyor's license in the state of Vermont. The summary of the rule changes are shown below. The full rule changes are presented as the current wording of the rules, the proposed new wording, and the rationale for the changes.

1

Removing Time Requirement

Rule Change 1 will remove the time interval (3-years) required for a licensed land surveyor to gain full status as a land surveyor. The removal of this time interval will allow a newly licensed land surveyor to supervise and review an applicant's progress towards licensure.

2

Adding New Pathways to Licensure

Rule Change 2 will increase the number of pathways to licensure from four to seven pathways. The additional pathways allow applicants with a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or civil engineering technology, or an Associate's degree in civil engineering technology, or a Certified Survey Technician (CST) to qualify for a license. These additional pathways will require an internship, portfolio, and examination.

3

Adapting Requirements for Comparable Bachelor's Degrees

Rule Change 3 addresses the requirements to obtain a land surveyors license for those applicants with a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or civil engineering technology.

4

Adapting Requirements for Comparable Associate's Degrees

Rule Change 4 addresses the requirements to obtain a land surveyors license for those applicants with an Associate's degree in civil engineering technology.

5

Considering Certified Survey Technician Credentials

Rule Change 5 addresses the requirements to obtain a land surveyors license for those applicants attaining various levels as a Certified Survey Technician.

6

Clarifying Test-Taking Logistics

Rule Change 6 clarifies when an applicant may take the exams.

[MORE DETAILS](#) 

RULE CHANGE 1

1.2 Definitions (current language)

- (f) "Supervising land surveyor" means a land surveyor who has been licensed three years or more and who conducts a regular personal review of an applicant's land surveying work during a period of internship.

Proposed language

- (f) "Supervising land surveyor" means a land surveyor who is currently licensed in Vermont and who conducts a regular personal review of an applicant's land surveying work during a period of internship.

Rationale

The current rule prohibits a Vermont land surveyor from enjoying all the benefits and privileges of a licensed professional. Additionally, the three years or more restriction to act a supervising land surveyor has the unintended consequence of increasing the work experience of individuals pursuing a land surveyor's license in Vermont.

RULE CHANGE 3

Proposed language

2.5 Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering or Civil Engineering Technology, Internship, Portfolio, and Examination.

- a) An applicant under this rule must have:
- 1) graduated with a bachelor's degree from an ABET-accredited civil engineering or civil engineering technology program;
 - 2) completed a 36-month internship as explained in Rule 2.10;
 - 3) submitted a complete portfolio as set forth in Part 4 of these rules; and
 - 4) passed the land surveying examinations designated by the Board.
- b) An application under this rule must be accompanied by:
- 1) Certified transcript;
 - 2) Required documentation from supervising land surveyors as set forth in these rules and;
 - 3) Application fee

Rationale

Although not exposed to the same curriculum as in land surveying, a candidate with a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or civil engineering technology has demonstrated a level of proficiency in mathematics and science to be well suited to obtain a license as a land surveyor. This difference in curriculum is addressed in the 36-month internship requirement for this pathway.

This is the editorial change to the current section numbers: 2.5 → 2.6. No other changes to this section.

RULE CHANGE 2

Part 2. Information for Applicants (current language)

2.3 Four Routes to Licensure Under Vermont's land surveying statute, there are four ways of qualifying for a license. They are:

- (a) Bachelor's Degree in Land Surveying, Internship, Portfolio, and Examination;
- (b) Associate's Degree in Land Surveying, Internship, Portfolio, and Examination;
- (c) Six Years Internship, Portfolio, and Examination; and
- (d) Endorsement.

Proposed language

2.3 Pathways to Licensure Under Vermont's land surveying statute, there are seven ways of qualifying for a license:

- (a) Bachelor's Degree in Land Surveying, Internship, Portfolio, and Examination;
- (b) Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering or Civil Engineering Technology, Internship, Portfolio, and Examination.
- (c) Associate's Degree in Land Surveying, Internship, Portfolio, and Examination;
- (d) Associate's Degree in Civil Engineering Technology, Internship, Portfolio, and Examination.
- (e) Attaining certification as a Certified Survey Technician (CST)
- (f) Six Years Internship, Portfolio, and Examination; and
- (g) Endorsement.

Rationale

The proposed additional pathways (four to seven) to licensure are intended to attract equally qualified applicants for licensure as a Vermont land surveyor. The additional pathways will strengthen the quality of applicants and allow more individuals the opportunity to pursue a land surveying license in Vermont. The additional pathways include options for individuals with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering to individuals that have attained a CST certificate. The proposed language maintains a pathway for individuals with other degrees or no formal education or training.

2.4 No change



Got Feedback?

If you have any thoughts or suggestions about the proposed administrative rule changes, please send them to:

Joe Flynn: vermontls714@gmail.com

Mark Day: mark@dlsvt.com

RULE CHANGE 4

Proposed language

2.7 Associate's Degree in Civil Engineering Technology, Internship, Portfolio, and Examination

- a) An applicant under this rule must have:
 - 1) graduated with an associate's degree from an ABET-accredited civil engineering technology program;
 - 2) completed a 48-month internship as explained in Section 2.10;
 - 3) submitted a complete portfolio as set forth in Part 4 of these rules; and
 - 4) passed the land surveying examinations designated by the Board.
- b) An application under this rule must be accompanied by:
 - 1) Certified transcript
 - 2) Required documentation from supervising land surveyors; and,
 - 3) Application fee.

Rationale

Although not exposed to the same curriculum as in land surveying, a candidate with an Associate's degree in civil engineering technology has demonstrated a level of proficiency in mathematics and science to be well suited to obtain a license as a land surveyor. This difference in curriculum is addressed in the 48-month internship requirement for this pathway.

RULE CHANGE 6

2.10 Taking the Examinations (current language)

- a) The applicant may submit an application and, if approved by the Board, take the Fundamentals of Surveying examination, the Principles and Practice of Surveying examination, and the Vermont State Specific surveying examination.

Proposed language

2.12 (old 2.10) Applying to take the Examinations

- 1) Applying to take the Fundamentals of Surveying (FS) Examination.
 - a) Any individual may submit an application to take the FS exam.
- 2) Applying to take the Principles and Practices of Surveying Examination and the Vermont State Specific surveying examination.
 - a) The applicant shall submit an application and, if approved by the Board take the Principles and Practice of Surveying examination and the Vermont State Specific surveying examination.
 - b) The application shall include a current FS certificate.

Rationale

Allowing any individual to apply for and take the Fundamental of Surveying Examination will increase the opportunity for individuals to become land surveyors in Vermont. This will also allow individuals the opportunity to obtain professional credentials that will promote professional career opportunities.

The proposed language in 2.12 2) is to clarify the exam process.

RULE CHANGE 5

Proposed language

2.8 Certified Survey Technician (CST), Internship, Portfolio, and Examination.

- 1) An applicant with a CST Level 4 certificate.
 - a) An applicant under this rule must have:
 1. hold a current CST Level 4 certificate
 2. completed a 48-month internship as explained in Section 2.10;
 3. submitted a complete portfolio as set forth in Part 4 of these rules; and
 4. passed the land surveying examinations designated by the Board.
 - b) An application under this rule must be accompanied by:
 1. current CST Level 4 certificate
 2. required documentation from supervising land surveyors; and,
 3. application fee.
- 2) An applicant with a CST Level 3 certificate.
 - a) An applicant under this rule must have:
 1. hold a current CST Level 3 certificate
 2. completed a 60-month internship as explained in Section 2.10;
 3. submitted a complete portfolio as set forth in Part 4 of these rules; and
 4. passed the land surveying examinations designated by the Board.
 - b) An application under this rule must be accompanied by:
 1. current CST Level 3 certificate
 2. required documentation from supervising land surveyors; and,
 3. application fee.
- 3) An applicant with either a CST level 1 or Level 2 certificate
 - a) An applicant under this rule must have:
 1. hold a current CST Level 1 or Level 2 certificate
 2. completed a 72-month internship as explained in Section 2.10;
 3. submitted a complete portfolio as set forth in Part 4 of these rules; and
 4. passed the land surveying examinations designated by the Board.
 - b) An application under this rule must be accompanied by:
 1. current CST Level 1 or Level 2 certificate
 2. required documentation from supervising land surveyors; and,
 3. application fee.

Rationale

Although not exposed to a formal education in land surveying an applicant that has attain certification at various CST levels has demonstrated a level of proficiency in the land surveying profession and is well suited to obtain a license as a land surveyor. The lack of formal education is addressed in the length of internships.

These are the editorial changes to the current section numbers:

2.7 → 2.9; 2.8 → 2.10; 2.9 → 2.11; 2.10 → 2.12; 2.11 → 2.13

THE CORNER CORNER

Swapping tales of our most memorable corner markers ... a first installment.

NO, THE HEADLINE IS NOT A TYPO. I've had it in mind for a while that since we all come across memorable corner markers that we've found (or set), hearing tales of these unusual, if not unique monuments might be entertaining to the membership. So, with this initial offering, I'd like to start the ball rolling on a new *Cornerpost* feature: "The Corner Corner." Consider this a challenge to Society members to send in accounts of the whacky, the appropriate, the inappropriate, the hard-to-find, the hard-to-occupy, the monumental or the otherwise interesting ways we've found property corners perpetuated.

Personally, I did once drag an old wood cookstove, found a few yards from the property corner I was re-monumenting, and superimposed it on the rebar I had just set. "Set Cookstove" appears in the legend of a Holland map from a survey I did in the '80s...but I digress...the corner I really want to talk about made searching for the proverbial needle-in-a-haystack seem like child's play.

The year was 1983 – so, before cell phones, before digital cameras, before tax maps, before GPS and, for me, before even owning an EDM or a computer. Derby was the town, and the Canadian border formed the

On the hunt for this particular corner, Paul Hannan discovered that the original surveyor had laid crushed delft pottery beneath the granite boundary.

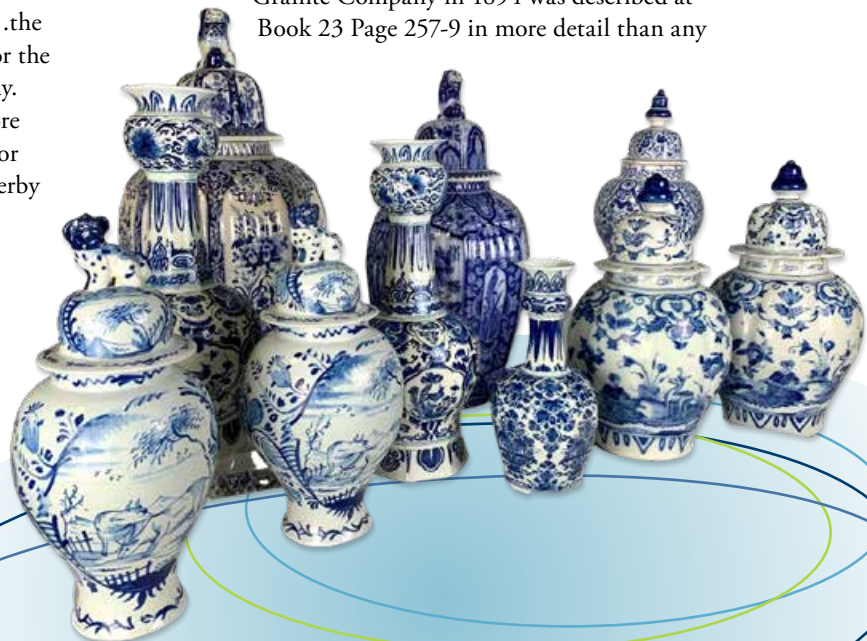
BY PAUL HANNAN, LS

northerly line of the property we were surveying. I'd been licensed for barely two years but had been in the area long enough to know that a recorded 1948 survey by A. Mayland Clough of abutting property meant my job just got a lot easier. Not every Northeast Kingdom surveyor from the "old days" instilled that sort of confidence in users of their work product, but Clough was one of the good ones. If he said he had set or found a corner, there was a high likelihood that, absent some tectonic shift, it would be there.

The significance of the fact that Clough was surveying for the Stanstead Granite Company didn't really sink in until I first visited the site, armed with a seemingly good map and all the youthful optimism of a newly minted land surveyor. As the name implies, the Stanstead Granite Company's sheds were located just over the line in Stanstead, Quebec. The Company did, however, own the Clough parcel in the U.S., AND had "dumping rights" on other land south of the border – my client's to be specific, as well as others in the neighborhood. Can't you just see the air leaking out of my balloon of optimism as I gazed uphill at the mountain of granite waste that had oozed down over the International Boundary in the ensuing 35 years since Clough had done his survey? His map symbols for "GM" (granite marker) suddenly morphed from blessing to curse. At least looking for a needle in a haystack one could employ a metal detector ...potential granite markers were EVERYWHERE. It looked like a game of pick-up-sticks with two hundred-pound sticks was in my future.

I often debate with myself as to whether it's better to start with on-site reconnaissance or with deed research when embarking on a new retracement project. In this case I'd gone into the Town Clerk's office only long enough to find the Clough map, make a copy and head out to see what I could find. As you can imagine, what I found sent me scurrying back to the land records in hopes of honing in a bit more closely before trying to unearth the relevant granite marker.

What John Baptiste Fregeau decided to the Stanstead Granite Company in 1894 was described at Book 23 Page 257-9 in more detail than any





“Can’t you just see the air leaking out of my balloon of optimism as I gazed uphill at the mountain of granite waste that had oozed down over the International Boundary in the ensuing 35 years since Clough had done his survey?”

deed I’d encountered until then or, perhaps, since. It started with a fairly general bounds description but then stated that the parcel was “...bounded and surveyed by George K. Addie, Esquire, Provincial Land Surveyor of the City of Sherbrooke in the said Province of Quebec on the Seventh day of March now instant (1894) and in his *proces verbal* ... described as follows to wit...”

What followed was a textbook example of everything a metes & bounds description should contain! It had bearings to minutes, distances to tenths, calls for abutters and, critically, six instances where Addie had “planted a granite boundary with broken delf thereunder.” In late 19th century, rural Vermont, if surveyors were employed at all, the degree of sophistication was just not at this level.

Between finding and rough taping in from some nearby monuments noted on the Clough map and in the Addie description, I was able to reduce the search area for the key marker to a few square yards. I had a fellow working for me at the time who, shall we say, sometimes didn’t know his own strength. I learned to keep him off the task of blazing

lines when I returned one spring to paint a line he’d blazed, only to find about every third sapling broken off where his zeal had caused his blazes to go a bit deeper than the cambium layer. Ah, but his enthusiasm was perfect for the game of pick-up-slabs we had before us.

After maybe an hour of hefting, prying, tossing, rolling and otherwise getting to the bottom of a mountain of granite grout, we finally found one, upright post that would not yield to our muscle-bound persuasion. True confession time: I did not know what “delf” was when I first encountered Addie’s word. Even if he had spelled it correctly – delft – I would still have had to consult Webster’s. Turns out it’s a particular type of blue ceramics associated with Delft, a town in the Netherlands known for its blue pottery.

So, yes, the punchline is that we cleared around the granite post, referenced it to tie points, and started digging. Once we lifted the “planted” granite out of its 90-year-old resting spot, sure enough, there were pieces of broken, blue pottery at the bottom of the hole. We did a little dance, a few high-fives and replaced the marker. If I’d had a cell phone camera, copious photos would have ensued, and this article might be more richly illustrated – you’ll just have to use your imagination. Suffice to say, it was a memorable find! 🌍

Send the story of *your* most memorable corner marker to Birgit McCall at birgit@vsls.org.

» BY KNUD E. HERMANSEN,
PLS, PE, PHD, ESQ.



Common Practical Deficiencies in Student Education

How colleges and universities should help students

transition from social to business communication styles.

» This is the eleventh article I have prepared in the series of articles offering thoughts on professional practice and education. In this article I am going to explain what I believe to be common deficiencies in student education from the perspective of the professional practitioner.

I offer this perspective from teaching surveying for over thirty years in four different universities and practicing surveying for over fifty years. Of course, I will acknowledge from the outset that individual students often suffer from one or more deficiencies in their knowledge despite the best efforts of the faculty. Also, there are programs that have

unique deficiencies brought about by faculty deficiencies or program deficiencies. This article will focus on deficiencies found across the many survey programs found in the United States. I should also state there are individual programs that don't suffer from the deficiencies I will discuss because of the efforts of faculty in the program. I will exclude a discussion on one common deficiency that I have already written about – business and management knowledge.

The most common deficiency that will be the focus of this article is communication skills. Communication skills involve e-mails, reports, correspondence, public

speaking, and CAD. Within each one of the methods of communication are numerous facets that could be explored.

I must acknowledge before continuing that this is the eleventh article I have written on practice and education. For those who have read my earlier articles, articles on my website, or even my fictional books, I am clearly not the source to expound on writing perfection. With my mea culpa on record, I continue.

The form of communication that a student has the most experience is often the area the student is most deficient. I am referring to e-mail and digital messages. It is discouraging to receive an e-mail from a senior or graduate that begins a formal e-mail with the salutation of “hey” or fails to include an adequate subject line that a business needs to triage e-mails.

The typical student’s experience with digital communication seems to be composed of continuous repetition of bad habits. The student and recent graduate have failed to shift their focus from e-mails, tweets, and twitters composing electronic messages that seems to be the center of their life to a business e-mail read by the employer or client. As an employee, they should realize that continuous quips during working hours from friends and family are a frustrating distraction that is inappropriate to continue as an employee during working hours, in a business environment.

Unfortunately, surveying programs have not been able to improve the communication skills of students using university resources. Many universities lack courses that teach business communications. All universities abound in courses on poetry, fiction writing, grant writing, persuasive writing, or technical writing. The last course is more appropriate to an engineer reporting engineering test results. The technical writing course has little relevancy to a surveyor reporting on a boundary location.

Writing courses taught by English faculty that have no experience in business and in many cases have never worked outside of a university environment — perhaps majored in literature, poetry, medieval writing, or such in graduate school — cannot be expected to teach the necessary writing and communication skills needed by surveying graduates practicing surveying.

The next deficiency of college graduates involving communicating is public speaking. Surveyors who have practiced for years know the value of public speaking. Public speaking courses offer a good start but fall short of educating students on the public speaking a surveyor most often encounters. I need not elaborate what many of you reading this article experience when speaking at planning board meetings filled with a crowd opposed to a client’s development, testifying as an expert witness, or coordinating a business meeting involving a multi-discipline project.

CAD is another deficiency often found in surveying and engineering students that has surprised me. Diagraming,

plating, and plans should be one form of communication that surveying students excel in, yet I often must resort to first threatening then later removing numerous points for a student’s repeated failure to use a diagram that would immensely clarify their communications.

Having given my opinion, I now offer advice by suggesting surveying faculty take it upon themselves to instruct students on communication deficiencies that continue to exist after the student has taken numerous writing and speech courses. Request letters of transmittals with assignments. CAD should be taught sooner rather than later in the surveying program. I believe six credits of CAD to be a minimum for a surveying student. Require diagrams with every assignment that would benefit by inserting a diagram into an assignment response.

It is discouraging to receive an e-mail from a senior or graduate that begins a formal e-mail with the salutation of “hey” or fails to include an adequate subject line that a business needs to triage e-mails.



I would and probably should end this article at this point but for one more item I must mention. In reviewing the article, I see that I have failed to create much fodder for controversy. To write an article without generating some controversy is unimaginable. Allow me to do so now.

I have noticed one concerted university effort at teaching communication to students that makes me roll my eyes in mystification. There are so many avenues of guidance that can be given to improve communication that are ignored. So, I must ask, why is it necessary to encourage, on a formal sign-off, what pronoun the writer wishes to associate with themselves when it is otherwise obvious. For example, if a person signs off as “Nancy,” why would I ever begin to think I should address “Nancy” using some other pronoun than as a she or her? If a “Harry” wishes to be addressed as a she/her pronoun, I almost get the point. Perhaps I am not sensitive enough to evolving social norms. I do know that if I could change social norms, I would focus on TV newscasters that show the picture of a person clearly dressed in a Marine uniform and then in a display of gross incompetence and insensitivity to thousands of Marines refer to that person as a soldier. 🇺🇸

Take a photo of the QR code to find more articles by Knud Hermansen, or visit umaine.edu/svt/faculty/hermansen-articles.



What the Licensed Surveyor in the State of Vermont Should Know

Reprint of a seminar delivered at Vermont Technical College on Feb. 27, 1973 and March 15, 1973 by Richard "Dick" Bohlen, VT LS #7

I SEE SCATTERED AROUND THE ROOM many men who I have worked with and some of whom I learned with, but for the benefit of those who do not know me, I am Dick Bohlen, proprietor of Truline Surveyors of St. Johnsbury. I have been engaged in this land survey racket since 1950 and I would estimate that 90% of my work has been land surveying.

During the course of being in business, we have also contracted for other types of surveys. We did the bulk of the survey work for some 18 miles of Interstate Highway in the St. Johnsbury area, and we have also been engaged in other surveys for the Vermont Highway Department. As you would expect, we have also accomplished a considerable number of sewer surveys, both in the design phase and in construction stake-out. I would also mention water line

surveys, airport surveys, building surveys, and other types of construction surveys. However, we have primarily accomplished property surveys for individuals, businesses, and corporations in and around the Northeast Kingdom and the northern part of New Hampshire.

Truline started out as a partnership and my original partner opened a branch office in Barre, where he worked for two or three years before departing for lands to the west – Gary, Indiana and vicinity. Realistically, then, Truline has been a sole proprietorship for the 23 years that it has existed. During the past 13 years I have been privileged to have at my right arm, one Bob Smith, originally from Cabot, Vermont. Therefore, as I use the pronoun “we” in this discussion, it indicates the conglomerate talent and experience of Bob Smith and myself.

This amounts to a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering at the University of Vermont for myself, plus 23 years of survey

experience. It also includes 2 years here at Vermont Tech for Bob Smith, plus 13 years of experience. Most important of all probably is the good common horse-sense that Bob has acquired from his rearing in the hills of Cabot on his father’s farm. This background, therefore, combined with a genuine love for the land and especially for the God-created beauty of Vermont, forms the background for what is to follow.

We have accomplished conventional surveys only -- surveys accomplished by use of transit and tape, and compass and tape. We do not use and have no working knowledge of any sophisticated equipment, such as electronic distance measuring devices, subtense bars, or even theodolites. We have often said that if it can be done with conventional survey equipment, we’ll try it.

As you all know, the subject assigned to me is massive in scope and with the time allotted here, I can only touch on some highlights of property line, field surveys, and what we have determined from experience and have established as our procedures.

EQUIPMENT

In the course of our surveys, we primarily use a steel 5/16" drag tape in 100 and 200 foot lengths. We prefer a tape with the calibrations before zero and within the last foot. Initially, we used tapes with the first and last foot calibrated, and the resultant practice of constantly subtracting from 99 caused many errors which we found disappeared when we switched to our present tapes. We also make it a practice to always put the zero end of the tape ahead so that the rear chainman always holds the foot to be recorded and the decimals come from the front tape man.

As many of you know it is possible to obtain a registered tape with a recorded tension for an exact 100 ft. Many years ago we ordered one of these tapes through the Lufkin Rule Company and it was calibrated by the Bureau of Standards in Washington, D. C., registered with them and forwarded



to us. Accompanying the tape came a calibration sheet that recorded the tension necessary at various types of support to result in an accurate 100 ft. With this tape, we established two brass plugs in a ledge near my house which we refer to periodically to check the accuracy of our tapes. I believe that the Vermont Society still holds a similar tape supplied to it by the Lufkin Rule Company. We did at one time borrow this tape to further check our reference plugs and, of course, found this tape to agree with the one that we hold.

It has been our procedure to always take temperature into account when taping closer than one half tenths. My personal procedure is to correct for temperature immediately upon taping any distance. I always verify this correction with my transit man in the field and I make it a practice never to record any dimension in my field book that has not been temperature corrected.

We also make it a practice to use tension springs when calling for an error of closure of 1/10,000 or better and this has proven to be a satisfactory practice. It has also been our experience that as kinks and breaks in the tape accumulate through usage, they seem to be compensated for by the stretching of the tape, resulting in minor corrections in tension in order to keep the tape in use.

As far as transits are concerned, we utilize 1' K & E Mountain type transits, and a 30" K & E Paragon transit.

We also accomplish many, many compass surveys and we have found that the hand compasses made by Suunto give us very good results. We often use them in conjunction with a Suunto clinometer and a 200 ft. tape, and have found that with care we can produce closed traverses with a degree of accuracy of 1/200 or better. We also use Woodsman's compasses mounted on a tripod for a little

better degree of accuracy. Our experience with a Jacob's Staff has not been satisfactory and we have found it to be too unsteady and inaccurate for the type of work that we try to produce. We also use the transit compass for more accurate compass surveys and have found that the accuracy can be increased by the utilization of the telescope and its magnification, as well as the vertical arc for vertical angles.

We have not been convinced that a theodolite is a practical instrument in the type of work that we do. We have always felt that the accuracy or any angle is directly determined by the ability of a man to hold a point, and as long as plumb bobs are utilized, we will stick with conventional transits.

We prefer to wind our angles 2, 4, 8 or 16 times, depending on the survey, which we believe minimizes the human error and gives us an accurate measurement of the angle. By winding the angles we mean that we measure the angles an even number of times with half of the angles turned with the telescope normal, and half with the telescope inverted. This removes any error that may be in the adjustment of the instrument. Along these lines, you have probably assumed by now that we usually utilize interior angles and sometimes deflection angles.

Before starting any survey, we of course pre-determine what degree of accuracy we want and govern our survey procedure accordingly. There follows a chart showing the various degrees of accuracy that we normally shoot for on any particular type survey, and the procedure that we use in order to obtain it. This, of course, is simply a guide and must be flexible, depending upon the individual situation.



GUIDE FOR DESIRABLE MINIMUM DEGREE OF ACCURACY

TYPE OF SURVEY	LOT SIZE	DEGREE OF ACCURACY	INSTRUMENT	TAPING	ANGULAR
Urban or Village	Up to 2 acres	1/10,000	30" instrument	100' tape Tension spring temperature correction. Level or vertical angle taped to half-hundredths.	3" ÷ # sides
Semi urban	2-10 acres	1/5,000	1' Transit Turn angles twice. (Est. to 30")	200' tape Temperature correction. Level or vertical angle taped to hundredths. Estimate correct tension.	1' ÷ # sides
Rural	10-25 acres	1/500	Using compass or transit observing bearings both ways. Read to 15'	200' tape Level or vertical angles.	—
Small Woodlot	25 to 200 acres	1/200	Compass reading to 15'	200' steel tape and clinometer	—
Large Woodlot	300 up	1/100	Compass reading to 15'	Slope tape	—

MONUMENTATION

Concerning existing monumentation, as far as corners are concerned, we like nothing better and believe there is no better boundary evidence than a deed call corner. In other words, if record deed call designates a specific corner marker, such as an iron pipe or a stone post, or a stake and stones, or a beech tree, or even a hole in the ground filled with charcoal, and that particular monument is found at that particular corner, we call this the “Pot of Gold” and use it as indisputable and recognize it as a place to “hang our hat” and start the survey.

If, however, the corner marker found is other than the one called for in the description, we then make it a practice to carefully weigh the apparent reliability of that particular monument.

As a guide to our thinking, and bearing in mind that every single corner of every single survey is a question and a puzzle unto itself, we would ask ourselves in part the following questions:

- Was the marker set at the time of the original conveyance, or was the marker set at a later time?
- Was it set by both parties involved, or set by only one party?
- Is it possible that the marker has been disturbed and re-set by others – the power company – the town – any sewer lines or water lines – any underground conduits – any gas mains, etc.?
- Are there any witness blazes?
- Has somebody tried to witness it in some other way?
- Was the marker set by a surveyor or by a lay person?
- Based on the number of markers observed in the area, is it consistent?
- Based on the number of markers and the number of surveys ever accomplished and the experience associated therewith, “how does it smell”?

And, of course, when finding a monument, it should be evaluated as to how close the monument would have to be to where the measurements based on other evidence place it. In other words, in any given situation, we would look for a monument at a particular location and at some distance around that location. Any marker found beyond a certain distance might not be observed anyway, unless of course, it is a deed call monument.

Finally, based on the evaluation of the monument and any and all testimony pertaining to it by knowledgeable people, we must make the judgement as to whether it should be observed.

We make it a practice never to remove any marker whether we observe it in the course of our survey or not. Our experience has been that further facts unearthed may give the marker new importance and it is always possible that the marker may apply to abutting lands and have no bearing on the particular property involved.

Concerning line monumentation, we follow basically the same procedure as with corner markers and believe that deed call line is of primary importance. If the record call mentioned such things as “along a tone wall, along a line marked by a wire fence or a rail fence, or along a line of blazed trees”, etc. and this is what we find on the line, we have hit another bonanza. There is nothing better for line monumentation, and we would base our survey on it.

As with corner monumentation, if we find the line marked in a way other than the way specified in the deed, or if no specific line monumentation is mentioned, then we must evaluate the apparent reliability of the line.

The questions to be considered in part are:

- Was the marking done at the time of the conveyance?
- Was it done at a later time?
- By both parties, or by only one party?
- Was the marking done by a surveyor or by a lay person?

And once again we must evaluate the closeness of the line to the apparent correct location, based on measurement, and ask ourselves the question as to how close must it be for us to accept it? And finally, we must determine as to whether we will observe the line as marked.

I cannot stress strongly enough, the importance of the existing monumentation. We have found that our thinking should not be “Is there any monumentation?”, but it should be to prove positively that there is no monumentation.

We have found it extremely important to search thoroughly in every possible location for any and all monumentation that may exist. We have been embarrassed too often because of monumentation not found or not looked for. We have also found that axe blazes on wood lot surveys and rural surveys are very important and we are constantly on the lookout for guidance from whatever axe blazing we can find.

Of course, it is important to be able to differentiate between an axe blaze and a bruise or hedgehog damage. This can be done usually by looking for axe marks in the blaze itself and as to whether there is a pattern to the blazes or if the blaze is matched at the same height on the same tree.

It is also necessary to evaluate the height of the blaze, bearing in mind that blazes can be 6-10 ft. off the ground,

depending upon your geographic location and the possible snow depth in that area.

It is also important to estimate the age of the blaze, which can depend on such factors as elevation and type of tree. Once again, however, the old experience is the best teacher. It is also important in the evaluation of a blaze or a series of blazes, to determine as to whether the blazes were made by a surveyor or a lay person.

During the course of our work we have come to establish a system of blazes based on what we have found in the woods and the procedure as we have used it. At right is a sketch of these blazes as we have seen and used them on our various surveys. As far as blazing corners is concerned, it seems to be more or less a matter of personal preference. Corner posts are blazed 4 times and sometimes less, depending upon the number of lines cornering at the point. Some men like to blaze a corner facing the property being surveyed and scribe the person's name involved, or the lot number, in the blaze. Some men blaze the corner where the lines come into the corner. It seems that either way is equally effective, as long as the intent can be understood.

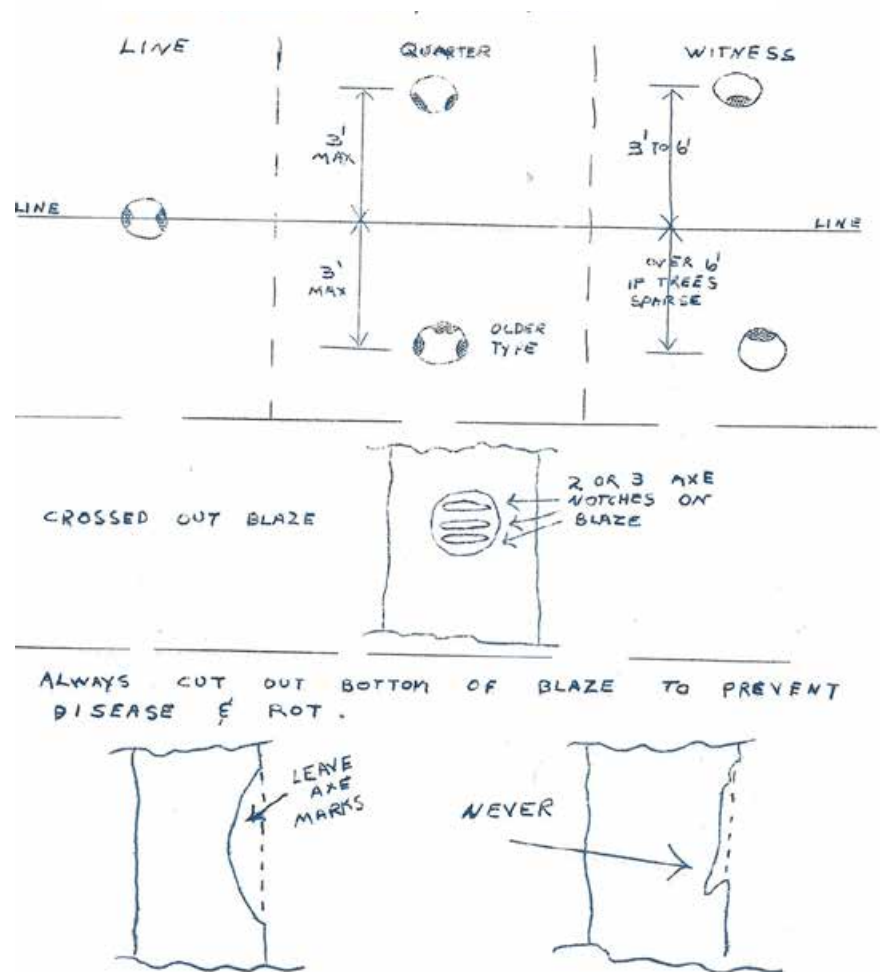
Of course the blazing takes time, as well as energy, but it does result in a good permanent job that will last many years. Economics, however, dictates the use of paint in preference to blazing in some cases, but we don't feel that the paint without the blazes is as effective or will last as long, and most of all, we do not feel that simply paint results in as professional a job as a good blazed line and painted also if possible.

One experience of ours is, I believe of interest and I would like to share it with you. Some time ago we were running a survey in the town of Sheffield and had carried a compass line down to the shore of a pond. Since the line continued some distance beyond the pond, we proceeded to the opposite shore and began to search for line evidence.

There were three of us and we proceeded to make circles and search for anything to indicate the line. As rodmen sometimes do, one of the men got tired and proceeded to utilize his posterior. Subsequently he called to me that he had found a pair of blazes. I asked him how high they were and he replied about a foot off the ground. Forget it, I told him. They must be hedgehog!

Shortly thereafter he called again that he had found others and upon investigation we found a line of blazed trees extending for over half a mile. This was a well blazed line and nowhere did we find any blazes higher than 18 inches off the ground. I always felt that this line had been

TYPES OF BLAZES WE'VE USED AND SEEN



blazed by a "cross-eyed Frenchman" or that the trees were not defaced because of their close proximity to the pond.

However, at the first seminar on February 27th, I got the answer from Warren Drown. Apparently the blazing was only done at the bottom of the trees in anticipation of a logging operation which would remove all higher blazes. This was the only time in my experience that I have seen low blazes only, but it would seem that similar practices must have been used in other cases. (Follow the instructions below to read the rest of the presentation.) 🌲

→ To view Dick Bohlen's full presentation, take a photo of the QR code with your phone or go online to bit.ly/bohlen-talk.



Random Notes

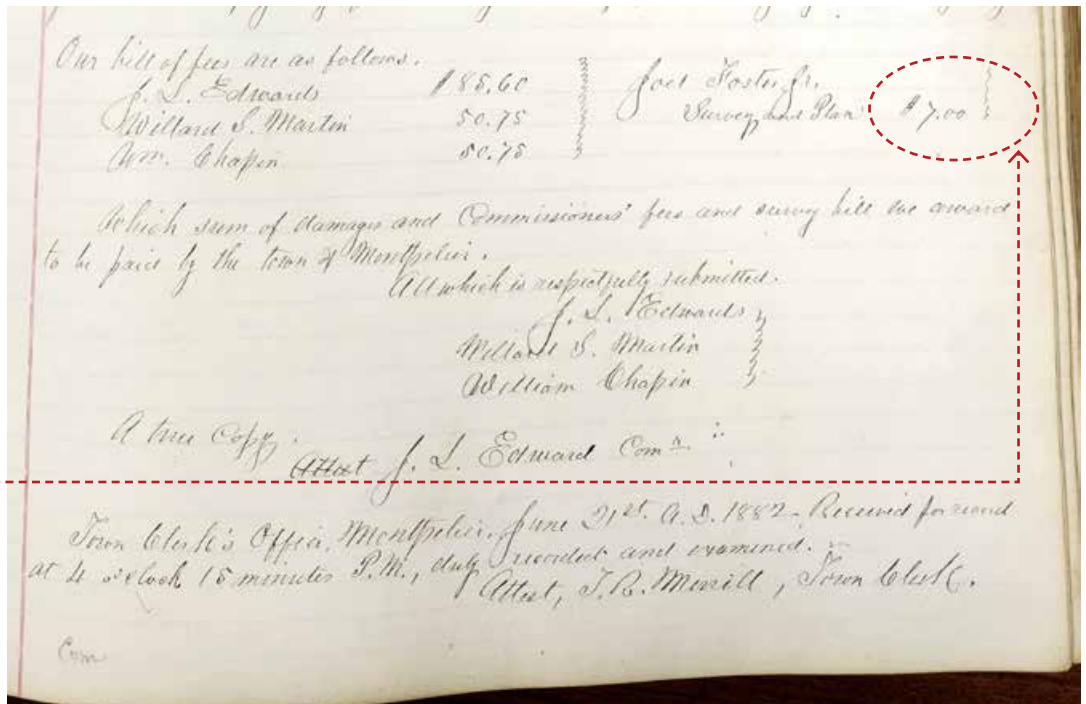


HIGH FLYING ON THE JOB

Patricia Kules, LS, sent in these photos from a private residence in Elmore, VT. The intricate metal sculpture shows Pegasus, the winged horse from Greek mythology, about to take flight.

TALK ABOUT INFLATION

Boone Meeden took this picture of land records volume 12 in Montpelier. As shown in the notes, the bill for a highway layout survey and plan for a small portion of East State Street was \$7 back in 1882!

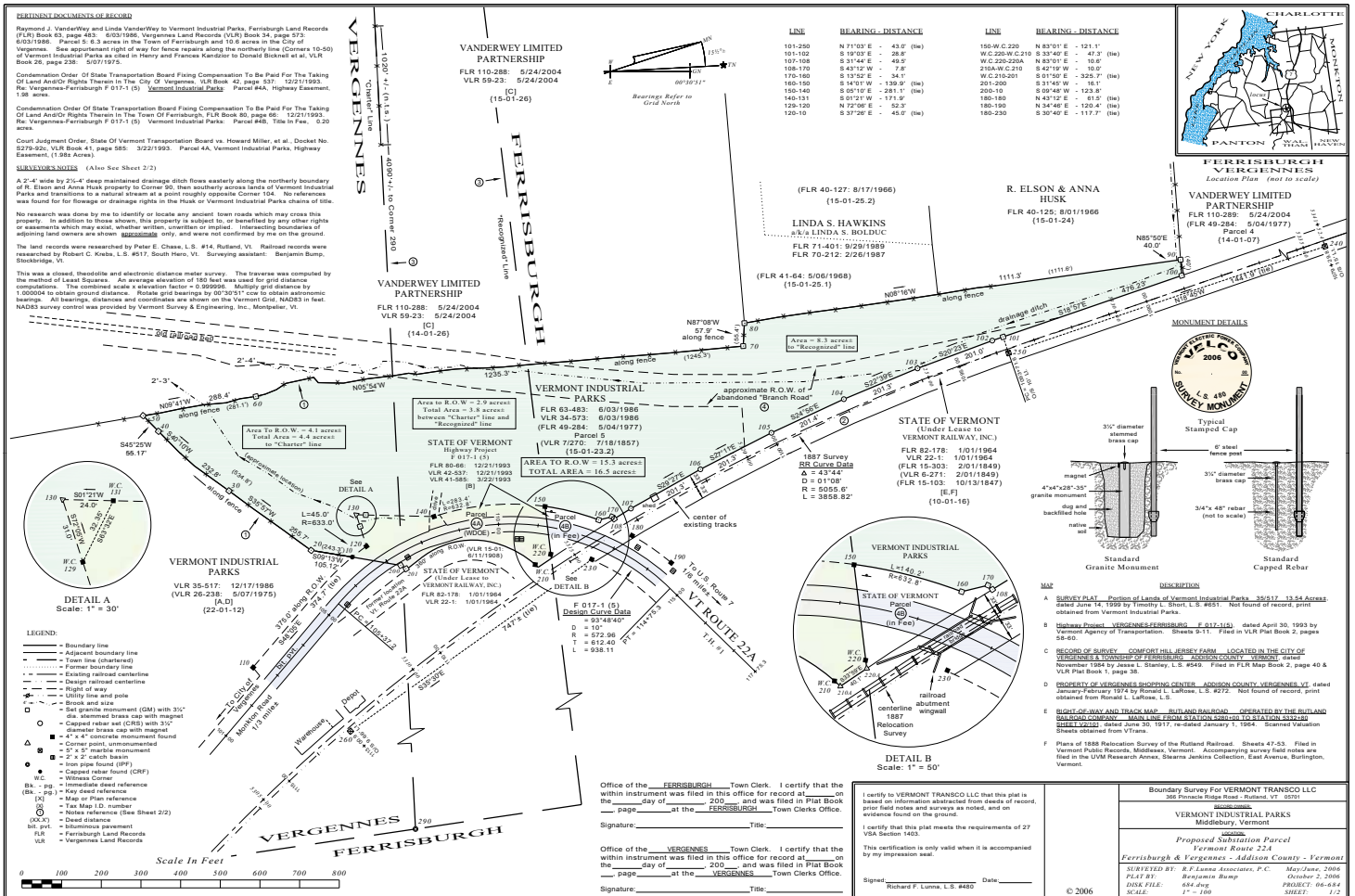


ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

While perusing some of my old project photos last month, I came across the photos at right, taken during a 2006 survey for VELCO in the towns of Vergennes and Ferrisburgh. During that project we were able to locate three original marble monuments along the adjoining right of way of Vermont Railway, Inc., thanks in part to the excellent research of Bob Krebs, PE, LS. Two of them were recovered 14" and 18" deep. The third was 42" deep as shown in the picture.

The top photo shows me (in the orange cap) with Bob Krebs. The other photo shows Bob with my assistant, Benjamin Bump, on top of the recovered monument. The map shows the location of the monument (#260) near the lower left corner directly above "VERGENNES" and across the tracks from the Warehouse. The marble corners were recovered from information shown on the 1888 Relocation Survey of the Rutland Railroad provided by Bob.

— BY RICH LUNNA, LS





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John P. Cushing | FEBRUARY 14, 1947 — DECEMBER 7, 2024

On Dec. 7, longtime and beloved Milton Town Clerk and Treasurer John P. Cushing passed away at age 77. Cushing, who served the town for 46 years, was well-known across Vermont for his work in municipal government, as a rescue squad member, volunteer firefighter, deputy game warden, maple syrup businessman, coach and more. He retired from



the town of Milton in March 2015. He was often the leading source of answers when other municipal clerks and treasurers — and even some state officials and legislators — were stumped by a question.

Cushing was a huge believer in government transparency. When Milton town and school governments had growing pains and struggled at times, he said letting the spotlight shine on government was the best way to resolve ugly issues. Colleagues and townspeople talked often about his honesty and ethics in office and in life.

Longtime Shelburne Town Clerk and Treasurer Coleen Haag said Cushing was the go-to municipal official when others were stumped. “John embodied all that we strive for in our lives. Love of family, community, state, profession and

his church filled his life with purpose. In turn he received respect and love from his family and those he served,” Haag said.

“John was humble about his accomplishments, but they will never be forgotten by those who had the privilege of knowing him,” said Haag.

Cushing served on the Milton Volunteer Fire Department for 30 years and assisted his town by helping to organize and serve on the first Milton Rescue Service.

After graduating from Milton High, Cushing studied municipal accounting at Champlain College. By age 21 he had become an assistant clerk in the Milton town office and about a year later on March 4, 1969 he became one of the youngest town clerks ever elected to that office in Vermont.

He further served Vermont as a deputy fish and game warden for 36 years. He often worked alongside veteran Warden Don Collins looking for deer-jackers and other violators. Cushing would love to tell stories about his days in the woods and along Vermont waterways.

A mass of Christian burial celebrated his life on Dec. 14 in St. Ann’s Parish in Milton. Memorial contributions may be made to the University of Vermont Home Health and Hospice or to St. Ann’s Parish food shelf.

Carroll Peters | VT LS #495 | NOVEMBER 13, 1953 — FEBRUARY 6, 2025

Carroll Alan Peters, of Hyde Park, 71, died with his family by his side on February 6, 2025 to be with the Lord. Carroll was born November 13, 1953 at Copley Hospital in



Morrisville, the fourth son of Byron (Cookie) and Dolly (Messier) Peters. As a teenager, Carroll grew up in Johnson living with his grandmother, Eula Messier. He attended Johnson Elementary school and graduated from Lamoille Union High School in 1971 and Vermont Technical College in 1973. He lived in Johnson, Cady

Falls and for the past 40 years in Hyde Park. He spent portions of his winters at a second home in Bedrock Mount Carmel Ridge Mobile Home Park in Brandon, FL. Carroll married Susan Bannister on March 23, 1974 and raised three children in Johnson and Hyde Park. Later he married Lynn Cline on February 14, 2014.

Carroll started his business career as a teenager having a morning Burlington Free Press paper route, an afternoon Barre Times Argus and weekend Grit paper routes. He worked for Saga Food Service at Johnson State and Vermont Technical Colleges, for Newtown Surveyors and at IBM. After graduating from Vermont Tech with an

Associate Degree in Civil Engineering, Surveying Major, he apprenticed with Newtown Surveyors, achieved his Surveying License and started Valley Surveyors, Inc. in 1976, later Valley Land Services, Inc. providing surveying and associated services to clients from all over the world until retirement in December 2024.

Carroll was a dedicated and loving father, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend to many. He was known for his excellent cooking abilities and shared many recipes with friends and at family gatherings; he spent most of his idle time doing Sudokus, crossticks, anacrostics, crosswords and gardening. He served on the Johnson Fire Department, the Hyde Park Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment, Hyde Park Village Development Review Board as an alternate, and was an Administrative Officer for the Cambridge Development Review Board. He was a Life Member of the Vermont Society of Land Surveyors, where he served a term on the Executive Committee, a member of National Society of Professional Surveyors, and a 50 plus year member of the United Church of Johnson.

A celebration of life was held Saturday, March 8 at the United Church of Johnson. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made in Carroll’s memory to Lamoille Home Health & Hospice or the United Church of Johnson.

October 21, 2024 • 6:00 p.m. • Google Meet

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 P.M. In attendance were Randy Otis, Lisa Ginett, Nate Yager, Keith Van Iderstine, Mark Day and our Administrator: Birgit McCall. Absent: Becky Gilson and Paul Hannan.

Secretary's Minutes

Minutes for the Executive Committee meeting for August 19, 2024 were reviewed. The motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2024 minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report for the period of January 1 to October 14, 2024: total income for period was \$68,239.44, total expenses were \$55,625.87, with a net income of \$12,613.66. This is good for this time of year, though we still have December to get through. There is \$6,918.04 in our savings, \$11,740.28 in our checking account, \$700.00 in PayPal and \$25.00 of undeposited checks which gives a total cash in hand of \$19,383.57. The investment balance is \$54,728.54.

Administrator's Report

Birgit reports that our 2024 Fall Conference had 100 attendees on Thursday and 55 attendees on Friday. It was noted that due to differences in the final bill for services at the conference, the facility fees were lower than anticipated.

Our December meeting will be a webinar, and we discussed and decided on taking a lower profit margin due to the good fall conference amounts taken in. The date will be either December 13th (more desirable) or the 20th depending on speaker availability. There are anticipated to be five speakers and six credit hours. We are able to use the NSPS Software to run the webinar.

Birgit has booked the venue for the spring double conference with NHLA at the Hilton Garden Inn in Hanover, NH, for March 28, 2025.

Birgit informed us that she has begun to have trouble with Quickbooks for the Education Foundation, but she and Keith will try to find a workaround for the issue.

We briefly discussed that the next "Cornerpost" should list the slate of officers to be voted on at the December business meeting, and if anyone wants to run for office they need to get their names to Birgit in time for the publications due date. Birgit will send out an email to the membership to ask if anyone wants to run. As always Birgit requests more content for "The Cornerpost."

Other Business

We need to find a new day/week for our meetings as Paul is no longer available on our regular meeting date. We discussed whether Paul can stay on the ExComm board now that he lives out of state. Because he is paying for an in-state membership it was thought that he can remain on the board. No final day/week was established.

The group is still wondering about Brad Holden's "secret" VLSL files, and Keith said he sees him some and will try to broach the subject.

Mark Condodemetraky has been running a class for floodplain management, which Keith attended. Mark discussed the future of surveying as a side subject and Keith thought that it might be an excellent subject for a conference. He said that Mark was amenable to doing a program on the subject for one of our VLSL seminars. The Program Committee should check with Mark, and Keith will talk to Joe about this subject.

Randy suggests doing a photo collections from former VLSL meetings. Maybe ask Scott Taylor for content? Also Birgit will put out an email to the membership asking if anyone has any old photos to share from VLSL conferences.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ginett, VLSL Secretary



Share Your Ideas

VLSL members are welcome to attend Executive Committee meetings, which are held in-person or virtually on the third Thursday of the month. Contact Birgit McCall to learn more: birgit@vsls.org.

January 16, 2025 • 6:00 p.m. • Google Meet

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M. In attendance were Randy Otis, Lisa Ginett, Keith Van Iderstine, new members Joe Flynn and Chris Haggerty, and our Administrator: Birgit McCall. Absent: Mark Day and new member Gayle Burchard.

Secretary's Minutes

Minutes for the Executive Committee meeting for October 21, 2024 were reviewed. The motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2024 minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report for the period of January 1 – 13, 2024: total income for period was \$5,836.80, total expenses were \$471.36, net income was \$5,392.44, and total cash on hand was \$19,865.50. Education Foundation Investment Balance was \$ 108,643.06 and VSLs General Fund Investment Balance was \$ 53,582.49

Keith also reviewed a VSLs Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual Final 2024 document. The total income for the year was \$72,193.33, total expenses were \$65,790.99, net income was \$6,402.34. Keith reports that we had a good, profitable year. Keith also notes that so far we have had a membership renewal rate of around 25%.

Administrator's Report

Birgit reports that our spring seminar, in conjunction with the NHLSA, will take place on March 28 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Hanover, NH. The Program Committee has two meetings scheduled over the next two weeks, but so far there are no details regarding speakers for the event.

Birgit notes that the VSLs cell phone that she uses needs to be replaced. Her cell service provider is "Visible," and she has looked at purchasing a new cell phone through that service. The least expensive phone available is \$90.00. However it was suggested that she does not need to stick with the lowest price. She has been authorized to spend up to \$300.00 to purchase the best possible phone for her needs.

Birgit also mentioned, as always, that she and Kelly need more content for "The Cornerpost." It was also mentioned that it is time to renew our Vermont Historical Society membership, which was approved.

Proposed Changes to Administrative Rules of the Vermont Board of Land Surveyors

Joe Flynn sent us a draft of the Proposed Rule Changes to the Administrative Rules of the Board of Land Surveyors. Joe notes that he has left the Board and the

current chair of the Board is John Diebold, who works well with the Office of Professional Regulation. They have proposed these rule changes in order to address the bottleneck in the path to licensure in our profession.

Joe is hoping to create a VSLs committee to act as a liaison to the Board in order to have our input on the rule changes. Certainly, the VSLs members will need to review and comment on the suggested changes to the rules. Joe will confirm with John regarding the advisability of this committee. Joe suggests that we get the draft rules printed in "The Cornerpost" so that the membership can review them and we can discuss them as a group at our spring seminar. This is a change of Rules and not Statutes. Birgit notes that the draft of changes need to be authorized for publication in "The Cornerpost" by the first week in February.

Other Business

A brief discussion was held on Brad Holden's "secret files." Is this the external hard drive containing all of the VSLs scanned maps? Keith did not have the opportunity to talk with Brad but Chris says that the files are all of Brad's personally collected historical old VSLs records including the original state papers. These materials are currently stored in the vault in the Underhill Town Clerk's Office. Brad went through the materials that were stored at Meg Shield's when she retired from her Administrator's position with VSLs, and Brad took all of the important documents.

Keith thought that it shouldn't be in the Town Clerk's vault as they are not public documents. Keith and Chris agreed that the best thing to do would be to take the documents, scan them and then give them back to Brad to be reinstalled in the Underhill Town Clerk's vault. Chris will ask to get the documents and depending on the volume, we will perhaps all share the scanning work of a certain amount of the materials after which they will be returned to Brad.

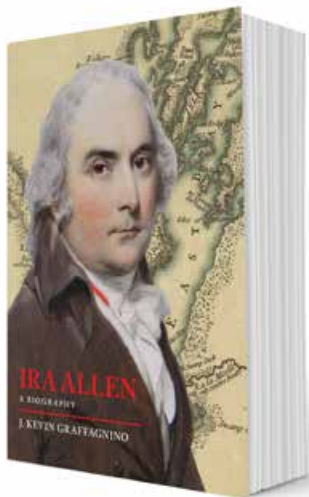
There was a brief discussion about the comparative cost of dues for surveying societies in the North East which shows that Vermont still has the lowest membership dues in our area.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 6:57 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ginett, VSLs Secretary

Ira Allen: A Biography

Author: J. Kevin Graffagnino / Published by Vermont Historical Society, Fall 2024



BOOK REVIEW BY
TIM COWAN, LS



Though today Ira Allen is considered one of the founders of UVM, we learn that this distinction may be somewhat dubious and was certainly based more on ambition than philanthropy. **Above**, a statue of Ira Allen and the Ira Allen Chapel both grace the grounds of UVM.

Surveyors interested in early Vermont history are, by default, interested in Ira Allen, the state's first Surveyor General. Though less famous than his oldest brother Ethan, Ira's name is indelibly imprinted on the history of Vermont, and especially that of Vermont's land tenure.

Though in recent decades Vermont historians have felt free to cast more shade on the Allen brothers, biographer J. Kevin Graffagnino goes deeper into the life and times of Ira in this thoroughly researched, clearly written book, published by the Vermont Historical Society in autumn 2024. Though Ira "... can be admired for his boundless energy and abundant ambition," said the author in a recent book talk, "he's not an easy character to like."

Well aware of Ira's term as surveyor general (1779-1787), I learned he was simultaneously, during a number of years, the state's treasurer as well as a counselor to, and often the scribe for, the "nearly illiterate" Governor Thomas Chittenden. These ties to the long-serving Governor of the republic (and later the state) and his "service" as surveyor general helped Allen become possibly the largest landowner in the Green Mountains, eventually owning around 120,000 acres around the state.

In following Ira's life story the reader traverses through the earliest colonial history of Vermont and the complicated story of the rest of the Allen family as well. From the chartering of the New Hampshire Grants by Benning Wentworth, the rush by Connecticut speculators (including the Allens) to purchase lands, the confusion of conflicting land grants from New York and the resulting Ethan-led skirmishes, the Allens were always in the middle of things. The reader will follow Ira and siblings through victory at Ticonderoga, then various stumbles and rebounds throughout the American revolution, and learn that the brothers could be as fluid in their patriotism as they were solid in their pursuit of commercial success. After the revolution the book thoroughly follows the years of back and forth between Vermont ("New Connecticut"), New Hampshire and New York, culminating with the Republic of Vermont (1777) and eventual statehood (1791).

Though complicated, the Allen brothers were, above all, intensely earnest at accumulating wealth, and wealth at that time and place was measured mainly in acres. If Ethan was the muscle, Ira was the brains of the family, or at least the most entrepreneurial of the brothers. Ira started accumulating land somewhat sporadically and soon developed a plan to concentrate on northern and northwestern Vermont, doing his best to accumulate mill sites and river valley farmlands. He especially took advantage of the confusion and uncertainty of title caused by the New York - New Hampshire dispute to accumulate vast acreage at "fire-sale" prices.

After statehood, Ira became less and less relevant on the political scene and meanwhile had difficulty keeping his portfolio of mills and land holdings afloat. Though today considered one of the founders of the University of Vermont, we learn that even this distinction may be somewhat dubious and was certainly based more on ambition than philanthropy.

If hoping to read lengthy accounts of Allen's exploits of surveying the untamed wilds of the Green Mountains, you may be disappointed. Despite his notoriety, Ira's one week of instruction from a master surveyor may not have made him the most skillful (or selfless) surveyor. It was disconcerting, too, to learn that our first surveyor general rarely had his own deeds recorded! Nor, it turns out, was he the best-organized state treasurer. Legislators spent years, it seems, trying to determine whether Ira owed money to the state, or if he was owed money by the state! But the book itself is an excellent "survey" of Vermont's early years and Graffagnino has an excellent understanding of the influence of 18th century land speculation and the initial subdivisions of Vermont.

Eventually Allen's duplicitous wheeling-and-dealing style of business and politics made Ira many enemies and skeptics around the state and across borders into New Hampshire, New York, Canada and England until there was virtually no one with whom to trade.

In his unvarnished re-telling of Ira's life, Graffagnino personalizes history in a way that will leave the reader with a better understanding of the formative years of the Green Mountain State. 🌿

2025 VT/NH Joint Meeting

Friday, March 28 • Hilton Garden Inn Hanover Lebanon
35 Labombard Road, Lebanon, New Hampshire

8 PDH Pending for VT / 2 CEU Approved for NH



SCHEDULE

- 7:30-8:00 am** Registration / Breakfast / Welcome
- 8:00-Noon** **Boston & Maine Right-of-Way Through the Years**
with Rick Kfoury, Railroad Historian
- Noon-1:00 pm** Lunch
- 1:00-1:30 pm** Joint Business Meeting
- 1:30-3:00 pm** **Panel Discussion on Young Surveyors**
- 3:00-3:30 pm** Networking Social/Break (1st drink free)
- 3:30-5:00 pm** **University of Maine Surveyors Program**
with Ray Hintz, UMaine Faculty
- 5:00 pm** Wrap-up

REGISTRATION FEES*

- Full Member in good standing of VSLS, NHLSA,
or kindred society\$280.00
- Associate/Affiliate Member/Technical Staff..... \$125.00
- Life Member \$225.00
- Group Rate (3+ with at least 1 member).....20% discount
- Non-Member\$425.00
- Student Member..... \$75.00

*Add \$35 late fee after March 6

SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

Right-of-Way / Railroads

The Boston & Maine Railroad was the dominant railroad company in much of New England for over a century. In this presentation, we'll examine "railroad fever" and the construction of the predecessor railroads that eventually made up the B&M system. We'll follow the B&M through the 20th century and the rise of tourism, and the railroad's general decline following World War II. We'll also examine the legacy of the Boston & Maine as it survives today in the form of modern railroads and heritage operations.

Panel Discussion on Young Surveyors

This panel is meant to spur a discussion on aspects of attracting and keeping young folks involved in the land surveying profession, including strategies to make the industry more appealing to younger people. The panel will converse on the career paths available to aspiring surveyors and the difficulties associated with obtaining credentials along those paths. Lastly the panel aims to discuss the importance of mentorship to young individuals, licensed professionals, and business owners. **Moderator:** Eric Salovitch (NH LLS #1052); **Panelists:** Rachel Dearborn (CT), Megan Jones (NH), Stefan Wollmar (NH), Jonathan Norwood (VT).

The University of Maine Surveying Program

UMaine Surveying Engineering Technology has expanded its online offerings over the past decade and now offers certificate- through doctoral-level programs. This seminar will demonstrate the principles applied in an online approach to surveying education, including how practicing land surveyors can contribute as mentors. We'll look at student issues including transferring courses from other schools, balancing education while working, e-tuition benefits, and the future of online education as it relates to licensure.

SPEAKERS



RICK KFOURY
Railroad Historian and Author



RAY HINTZ, LLS
UMaine Faculty Member



ERIC SALOVITCH, LLS
Pres./CEO, Northam Survey

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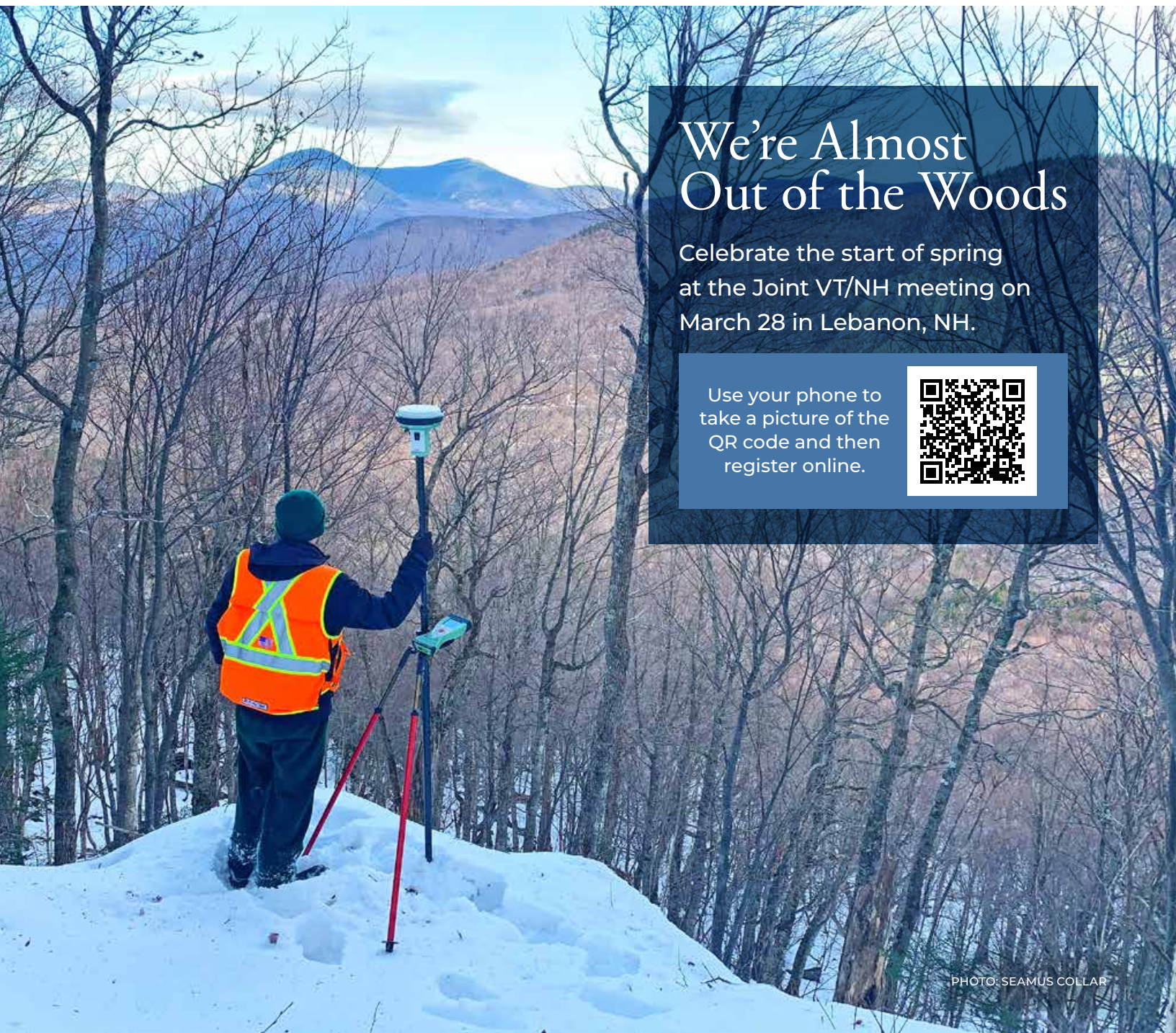
Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

Please return form with payment to: VSLS, P.O. Box 99, East Montpelier, VT 05651. Questions? birgit@vsls.org



The Cornerpost

P.O. Box 99
East Montpelier VT
05651



We're Almost Out of the Woods

Celebrate the start of spring at the Joint VT/NH meeting on March 28 in Lebanon, NH.

Use your phone to take a picture of the QR code and then register online.

