

Under-represented Groups in Surveying

**NEWSLETTER NO. 3/06
JOINT COMMISSION WORKING GROUP
ON UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS IN SURVEYING**

Contents

**Working Group on Under-represented Groups in Surveying, by Gabriele Dasse, Germany
Public Relations, by Lesley Ewoniak, Canada
A State Surveyors' Society, by Loyce Smith, USA**

Working Group on Under-represented Groups in Surveying

Session "Under-represented Groups and Ethics!"

During the FIG Congress 2006 in Munich Germany, 8-13 October 2006, the Working Group gets the opportunity to present papers on Thursday, 16:00-17:30:

Under-represented Groups and Ethics

Commission: 1 and 2,

Chair: Mr. Ken Allred, Vice President of FIG, Canada

Rapporteur: Ms. Gabriele Dasse, Germany

Dr. Ron Adler, Dr. Joseph Forrai and Mr. Haim Srebro (Israel):
Professional Practice Based on Education, Ethics and Standards

Ms. Gabriele Dasse (Germany):
Guidelines to Enhance the Representation of Under-Represented Groups in FIG

Ms. Jennifer Maldar (Germany):
Let's Talk about Us!

Mrs. Angela Etuonovbe (Nigeria):
Improving Participation of Under-represented Groups – Projecting the Image of the Nigerian Female Surveyor

Ms. Gerda Schennach (Austria):
Gender Issues for Land Registration and Professional Qualification

Enhancing the Representation of Under-Represented Groups in FIG

Topic 17 on the agenda of the FIG General Assembly in Munich, Germany 8 and 13 October 2006 is FIG publication 35: Enhancing the Representation of Under-Represented Groups in FIG:

<http://www.fig.net/admin/ga/2006/agenda.htm>

Appendix to item 17:

http://www.fig.net/admin/ga/2006/agenda_app/app_17_under_rep.pdf

The article of the month August 2006 is dealing with the same subject:
http://www.fig.net/pub/monthly_articles/august_2006/dasse_august_2006.htm

“I would like to express my thanks to all involved in FIG and other national and international organisations who supported the Task Force and the Joint Commission Working Group on Under-represented Groups in Surveying during the last nine years. By working together, pooling resources and sharing ideas we achieved a vital network, published 30 Newsletter up to know and organized several sessions during FIG Working Weeks and Congresses. One result of this wonderful cooperation are the Policies to Enhance the Representation of Under-represented Groups in Surveying. Special thanks to Clarissa Augustinus, Clara H. Greed, Boo Lilje, Tommy Österberg, Dory Reeves, Siraj Sait, Jennifer Whittal and Wendy J. Woodbury Straight for their excellent contributions.”

Gabriele Dasse, Germany, Chair of the Working Group; email: g.dasse@gmx.de

Public Relations by Lesley Ewoniak, Canada

(reprinted with permission of the writer from ALS News, published by the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association)



It seems as though all we ever hear about these days is the shortage of labour. Where can we find all the people to fill the gaps of all of the field crews that we need to satisfy our client's demands? Let me suggest a possibility...women.

Yes of course, I know the difficulties that may arise from hiring a female in the oil and gas industry. Many of the consultants are hesitant in having a “girl” come out to do the survey for them. However, I found that I had more success in dealing with them than not.

Let me give you some statistics concerning the current standing of the make-up of the market place. Women make up an estimated 47% of the labour market (Statistics Canada 2005), which is consistent with the University of Calgary Geomatics Engineering program having approximately 50% of students being female. The increasing number of women in geomatics in both BC and Alberta show promise that the under-representation of women in geomatics is fading. However, women commissioned or registered as articling students with the Alberta Land Surveyors Association account for only 11.5% of the total membership and only 2% of the Association of British Columbia Land Surveyors' membership.

To raise awareness of a career in land surveying, Lesley Anne Sick, (articling ALS), Shauna Goertzen (BCLS), and I held a presentation at the University of Calgary

Geomatics Career Day on February 2, 2006. The objectives of the presentation were to increase the level of understanding of how to obtain a commission, as well as the role of a land surveyor. Topics of the discussion specific to women were the physical demands, safety, and work/ life balance that come with having a career in land surveying.

I find that the main concern of women entering our work force are the physical demands of the job. Hiding the fact that land surveying is physically demanding will not make the industry more attractive to females, instead it will give them a false sense of what it is like. However, there are many ways to work around the tasks to decrease the amount of intensity that a job appears to have. Here are some examples:

- Use the buddy system.
Having a female chainperson for most of my party chiefting time, we had to use the strength of two people rather than one.
- Be smart.
Look for alternatives to the “brute force” method. .
- Use equipment that makes tasks easier.
Instead of lifting a quad out of the mud, use a winch. .
- Maintain your equipment.
Chopping down a tree with a sharp axe is much easier than with an axe that is dull.

Women in the land surveying profession do not have to be amongst the strongest women in the world, they just need to be smart about how the tasks can be accomplished. Having the knowledge and physical capabilities are important, but attitude is a huge success factor.

Sugar coating things is not really my strong suit so I'm not going to tell the women out there that this profession is fully accepting of women. However, I will say that it is getting much better. The number of women encountered in the field is continually increasing, reducing the shock to consultants when a female crew arrives to survey a pipeline. I found that in the majority of cases, the female presence is welcomed. If it isn't, it doesn't take a long time for them to discover that the job can get done regardless of who is completing it.

Safety has changed the way we conduct ourselves in the field. When I speak to females wanting to enter the profession, they are not only concerned with safe work procedures, they are more concerned about the possible harassment that they may encounter in the field. Your personality and the way you conduct yourself will have the most impact on what you will have to deal with. I found that the majority of the time the situations that you encounter are under your control.

Work/life balance is a very important consideration when selecting a career. Land surveying is similar to other professions and one cannot always expect to enjoy regular hours. The hours that a land surveyor works can range from 40 to 80 hours a week. This will depend on the chosen region and sector serviced.

In the current job force, more employers are being flexible with work schedules, hours, and vacations where family commitments are concerned. Many land surveyors

find that their own clients dictate their workload. They have the freedom and flexibility to manage their projects and the number of hours they work.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of manpower and a large volume of work and finding the “work-life balance” can be a challenge. Having said that, employers are willing to accommodate professionals and other employees, to ensure that the career they have chosen is a satisfying one. As a professional, your value to your employer will be substantial, and thus finding a routine which meets your needs is a priority.

I strongly encourage women to enter into land surveying. I find that every day presents itself with a new challenge, and with the rate of change in technology the amount that one can learn is unlimited.

Do you ever remember reading this riddle and being stumped?

A young boy and his father were out playing football when they were caught at the bottom of a giant pileup. Both were injured and rushed to the hospital. They were wheeled into separate operating rooms and two doctors prepped up to work on them, one doctor for each patient. The doctor operating on the father got started right away, but the doctor assigned to the young boy stared at him in surprise. “I can’t operate on him!” the doctor exclaimed to the staff. “That child is my son!” How can that be? Until more women got into medicine, the answer was not as easily thought of as it is today. The image of what a surveyor looks like is changing.

By Lesley Ewoniak, A.L.S., Canada, McElhanney Land Surveys,
email: lewoniak@mcelhanney.net

A State Surveyors’ Society by Loyce Smith, USA



The Organization

Idaho Society of Professional Land Surveyors is typical of the state societies throughout the United States. The organization started as a very subordinate subgroup of Idaho Society of Professional Engineers, probably about the time the state began to issue separate licenses for land surveyors. In the early 1970s the two professions had diverged so much that no surveying (or drafting) courses were required of engineers; and few were offered by the state institutions at the college level. Land Surveyors in two widely separated parts of the state started holding meetings to discuss issues they were facing. The two “Land Surveyors of Idaho” organizations found out about each other and combined their efforts in 1974 to become the Idaho Association of Land Surveyors (later renamed Idaho Society of

Professional Land Surveyors or ISLPS). The process of forming a nonprofit organization made it necessary to develop Articles of Incorporation, with definitions of the purposes of the association. The stated purposes are similar to those of other state societies:

- Advance the science of land surveying, in furtherance of the public welfare
- Contribute to public education in the use of surveys, maps and records
- Encourage improvement of college curricula for the teaching of surveying
- Support publications that will represent the interests of surveying
- Cooperate with ACSM in all matters of mutual interest and concern
- Foster and maintain high standards of professional ethics and practice in land surveying
- Honor the leaders in the science of surveying

Bylaws were drawn up and the first officers and directors were elected. During those early years, the operation of the organization was pretty informal, with the records being stored in a box in the secretary's basement. At the first statewide convention in 1975, the registration fee was \$1.00 (no meals were included). I became a "student" member at that gathering and have had the opportunity to grow with the organization.

Starting Local

While I was a full time technician and a part time student, I began attending meetings of the local section (called chapters in some states) of ISPLS. This turned out to be as much of a learning opportunity as the daily work experience of staking pipelines or the solving of theoretical problems from textbooks. Sometimes it was not easy to decipher the jargon or understand the significance of the issues discussed, but what better way to find out than listening to the professionals who had "been there, done that"? This does not mean that beginners can just grace the group with their presence and soak it all up like a big sponge. There is work to be done, and the lack of a license does not grant the right to be idle. A Land Surveyor in Training may hold certain offices in the section. If the local section is host for the statewide convention, a technician or Land Surveyor in Training (LSIT) can be recruited to help with work on publicity, registration or running errands. The Professional Land Surveyors are willing and happy to share their knowledge with future surveyors who are on their way to the license exam. It was a big help to me personally to have the benefit of these contacts as I prepared for the LSIT examination and then the Professional Land Surveyor (PLS) examination a few years later. I made an effort to repay the group by taking on the challenge of being an officer. When I was section chairman, I tried to have an interesting speaker for each meeting. The intent was to have a presentation on something related to surveying. However, the best received program had to do with home built airplanes. Maybe that was because so many of our members are pilots themselves. All these years later I remain active on the local level and encourage the surveyors and their crews to participate and contribute. Some ISPLS sections have large membership lists and hold regular meetings. In the remote areas, the sections are small and meet when they have something urgent to discuss.

State Level Involvement

Once I obtained my PLS, I was eligible for some of the ISPLS responsibilities reserved for registered professionals. I declined an offer to become historian and lost an election for treasurer. Then one day the newsletter editors suddenly quit. The president asked me to take on that job. I had little background for it except one nonproductive semester of high school journalism and the good fortune of having had the world's best English teacher. For a few years I worked on the newsletter by myself, eventually getting tagged for editing two other newsletters – my department's publication at work and a churchwomen's newsletter. When I was nominated for vice president, I recruited a friend to take over the newsletter. Except for about a four year hiatus, he and I have worked on the newsletter ever since. This publication, The Gem State Surveyor, prints mostly original articles by Idaho surveyors, board meeting minutes, committee and section reports, advertising by suppliers and announcements of events of interest to surveyors in Idaho and elsewhere.

I had personal goals as editor and later as president of ISPLS. As editor, I had hoped just once to see an article from our newsletter reprinted by some other state. Then as president I had wanted very much to get a scholarship established for survey students at one of the Idaho colleges. Neither of these things happened when I was in office, but a number of Gem State Surveyor articles showed up in other newsletters. A couple of our authors are now international, having been reprinted in Canadian journals. The president who followed me saw the establishment of a scholarship fund, starting out with one scholarship to a student at Idaho State University in Pocatello. From this modest beginning, the fund has grown to sponsor two at ISU – one in the four year geomatics bachelor's degree program and one in associate's degree in technology, as well as an additional scholarship for a student in one of the other Idaho institutions. So far, the third scholarship has been awarded to students at Lewis and Clark State College in Lewiston. This year the board approved money for three more scholarships to be given to high school seniors who will be attending the geomatics program.

The Golden Years?

After I retired from my long term job, I worked sporadically on free lance CAD drafting for a few years. In 1999, the Executive Director of ISPLS decided to concentrate on other interests and the president asked me to take that position. Then I got to find out what state societies really do. Once again it has been a great learning experience and demands my best efforts in fields outside my background. The positive side to counter my lack of clerical and administrative experience is my long inside involvement with the organization. Another state's executive advised me to "know the people and know the money". I already knew the people and if I live long enough, I might eventually know the money. I already know we have more of it than we did when I started.

Meeting Those Lofty Goals

As executive director, my responsibilities include organizing or assisting with the statewide activities:

- Maintaining the society's office and records;

- Membership records
- Financial records and investment processes
- Ordering supplies
- Answering questions from the public about survey matters
- Providing information requested by members (too often having to tell them I do NOT know of good field or office people looking for work).
- Quarterly board of directors meetings to conduct the business of the society
- Annual convention featuring
 - Exhibits of the latest in equipment and technology
 - A variety of presentations, most of which qualify for continuing education credits
 - Awards to outstanding professionals
 - Scholarship auction
 - Guest activities
 - Social events
- Publications
 - Quarterly newsletter
 - Brochure for new members
 - Brochure for public education
- Education
 - Along with other ISPLS members, I have been appointed to the Advisory Committees for both the Geomatics and Technology programs at ISU. This committee evaluates the performance of the programs by reviewing the curricula for effectiveness and tracking the employment of graduates.
 - Publicizing the scholarships offered and selecting the recipients.
- Organizing and carrying out special events to publicize the survey community, such as:
 - Center of population monumentation.
 - Lewis & Clark Bicentennial celebrations and monumentation of trail sites.

Benefits of Membership

So what does a member gain from joining the society besides a certificate and a bumper sticker? From early in a surveyor's career until retirement and beyond, the contacts and friendships formed through the organization offer an exchange of knowledge plus lifelong bonds with esteemed peers. The society brings together surveyors from different age ranges and varying backgrounds. Everyone benefits from the exchange between vigorous youth with their adaptability and energy and seasoned surveyors with their wealth of knowledge and practical experience.

Who benefits from the existence of the society besides the members and the group itself? One of the stated reasons for professional licensure is the protection of the public. By contact with other surveyors, an individual practitioner is more likely to keep skills and knowledge up to date than one who focuses only on his or her own firm and local projects.

Busy Professionals

Practically all surveyors in Idaho are extremely busy at present with growth and development at a high level. It is a service to themselves, the profession and the

public that so many of the licensed surveyors take the time to participate in their society as officers, board members, speakers or at least attending the meetings for the exchange of ideas and knowledge. Besides, they have fun when they get together.

By Loyce Smith, USA, Executive Director of the Idaho Society of Professional Land Surveyors; email: loyce@velocitus.net

Editor:

Chair of the Joint Commission Working Group on Under-represented Groups in Surveying

Ms Gabriele Dasse, Kleinfeld 22 a, D-21149 Hamburg, Germany

e-mail: g.dasse@gmx.de

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