

# EVERGREEN STATE *Surveyor*

Fall/Winter 2017/18

Serving the Surveying Community in Washington

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*LSAW is committed to promoting the profession and science of surveying for the benefit of its members and the public. We promote lifelong learning, high standards of ethics and practice, legislative leadership, and community involvement. Check out our website at [www.lsaw.org](http://www.lsaw.org).*

# EVERGREEN STATE *Surveyor*

The quarterly publication of the Land Surveyors' Association of Washington is published as a service to the land surveying profession of Washington. It is mailed to all Licensed Land Surveyors' Association of Washington as well as to all members of the Land Surveyors' Association of Washington. **The Evergreen State Surveyor** is an open forum for all Surveyors, with an editorial policy.

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All articles reports, letters, and contributions are accepted and will be considered for publication regardless of the author's affiliation with the Land Surveyors' Association of Washington. Contributions should be emailed to [info@lsaw.org](mailto:info@lsaw.org). We can accept WordPerfect or Microsoft Word files. We can accept ASCII text files or word processor files from the following programs: WordPerfect or Microsoft Word.

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Fall ..... August 1      Winter..... November 1

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Opinions expressed by the editor or individual writers are not necessarily endorsed by the Land Surveyors Association of Washington Officers or its Board of Directors. Original articles may be reprinted with due credit given to the source and written notification to the Land Surveyors Association of Washington, unless otherwise noted.

# QUARTERLY ESS PHOTO CONTEST



We are starting an ESS Photo Contest!  
Please submit your favorite photos to the  
Editor and Chief, Chris Royak and the  
winner will be the cover of the next issue!

Please submit your photos to Chris at:  
[Kayorc@yahoo.com](mailto:Kayorc@yahoo.com)





# From the President

by: Carla Merritt, PLS

As I enter into my final quarter serving as LSAW President, I realize how quickly the year passes and how difficult it is to make a difference within an organization and our profession. It really takes every impassioned individual making up the group to impact change of any significance. In this report I would like to recognize the efforts of some of these individuals and make a plea to all members to look within themselves and find some way to support our organization and enhance the future of our profession.

During this past quarter there has been much activity and effort that goes unnoticed by the majority of our membership, but which is critical to the functioning of our organization. Lynee Forsyth and the By-Laws committee, along with the help of our management company, have been working hard to clean up our By-laws and regulations to ensure they are current, compliant with state laws for non-profit organizations and consistent with the goals and values of the organization. This has been no easy chore, and I commend their hard work and efforts. This exercise has brought to my attention the need to review our mission and strategic plan in the near future as well, to ensure our goals and efforts are aligned with the mission of our organization. LSAW will need volunteers who are interested in shaping the future direction of our organization to serve on this committee.

Amanda Askren and the conference committee have been diligently working to coordinate the 2018 Conference in Spokane. This is going to be another great event, and we are hoping for a strong turnout from our membership. We need to recognize the importance of networking with surveyors throughout the state and make every effort possible to attend so that our orga-

nization can be strengthened by our statewide cooperation. The conference committee is also seeking volunteers to participate with the planning of future conferences.

Jim Coan and the Education Committee have been working to raise funds and develop a second year online surveying program for the Renton Technical College. This is a huge undertaking, and the Education Committee needs a strong team to support their efforts. In my opinion, this should be one of our most active committees, working to support one of the most important issues faced by our profession. But without the support of active and engaged volunteers across the state, we will continue to struggle to maintain our educational programs and provide opportunities for the education of our future surveyors.

During the past few months the LSAW Foundation has awarded eleven scholarships to surveying students across the state totaling over \$12,000. As the LSAW Foundation Chair, Ken Swindamen is always seeking support for the Foundation in both tax deductible monetary donations and volunteers to serve on the Foundation's Board of Directors. This is a great opportunity to make a contribution to support the education of future surveyors with either your time or dollars, depending on which you might have a surplus.

After serving as Chair of the Legislative Committee for several decades, Jon Warren is also looking for a replacement to step in and take over this role. In addition to the need for new leadership within our state committees, the Chapters are looking for new faces to step up and serve in leadership roles at the local level as well. ■

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### On The Cover:

Photo by Jim Coan, PLS - Southwestern MT. Route 278 between Wisdom MT and Dillon MT. Latitude = 45°19'53"N Longitude = 113°14'37"W, Elevation = 7,360. Beautiful country.



## Western Federation of Professional Surveyors (WFPS) Book Nook

### *“The Measure of Manhattan: The Tumultuous Career and Surprising Legacy of John Randel Jr., Cartographer, Surveyor, Inventor,”* by: Marguerite Holloway

Review by: John Thatcher, PLS, WFPS Delegate

In March of 2013, shortly after my wife Sue and I returned home from our first visit to New York City, the April 8 issue of *The New Yorker* arrived containing a brief review of Holloway’s book.

Curious, I purchased and read the book. I think any surveyor interested in our roots – and in comparing present-day hardships with those of the era before digital technology, will enjoy this tale. Reading the book reminds me of the David Thompson story in the sense that here we have a surveyor of epic historical significance who is largely unknown and unheralded.

My original plan was to write a detailed review of the book about Randel. But then the December 13, 2013 digital issue of POB magazine dropped into my inbox stole my thunder. In that issue, John Hetzler interviews author Holloway about the book. So I will exhort you to read the book (which is very thoroughly researched and well written) and highlight a few salient points from the POB interview.

Marguerite Holloway is the director of science and environmental journalism at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism. She got interested in Randel in 2003 when she was profiling Eric Sanderson (Sanderson did the “Mannahatta” project for the New York Times, in which he overlaid present-day Manhattan with the pre-developed island). Sanderson often referred to Randel, and Holloway became intrigued.

When Holloway began researching John Randel, she found he was lost in obscurity. Most information that was available was contained in 45 notebooks spanning the years 1808 to 1823, preserved by the New York Historical Society. In those notebooks Holloway found not only Randel’s survey calculations but also a journal of his personal life.

Randel was obsessed with accuracy and doing it right, whatever the cost. He was obsessed so much with accuracy that he invented his own instruments, at his own expense. That explains the word “inventor” in the book’s title.

How about this for a corner search? As part of her research for the book, Holloway went out in the “field” with Reuben Skye Rose-Redwood and J. R. Lemuel Morrison to search for original Randel monuments. The description of this corner search kicks off Chapter 1. They found an orig-

inal Randel iron pipe embedded in a large rock in the lower level of Riverside Park at W. 115th Street in Manhattan. Good thing: most of Randel’s monuments were set for street intersections and were definitely not placed in monument boxes. We all have had our stakes pulled out in the dead of night by disgruntled adjoining. Well, any surveyor who has dealt with right of entry issues will enjoy the stories of Randel’s constant battle with landowners – both in the field and in court.

This is a fascinating history of the beginnings of the urbanization of Manhattan Island and a compelling biography of the little-known surveyor, mapmaker and inventor whose task it was to lay out the island’s street grid.

But the Manhattan Grid is only half the story. After Randel’s Manhattan contract was completed and his reputation as a surveyor and engineer was at its zenith, he worked elsewhere in the region scouting and designing most eligible routes for canals, and later for the nascent railroad industry. This is where things started going south for Randel, and this is another instance where the comparison with David Thompson is apt. Randel and Thompson both performed important and groundbreaking surveying work, and both men died obscure and penniless. According to author Holloway, writing about the mire of lawsuits into which Randel became increasingly bogged down toward the end of his career, “The cases laid bare the intense politics, personal rivalries, and finances that underlay the building of America.”

There is the fascinating side story in the book: the story of *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York*, a book and web-base project by Eric W. Sanderson. Mannahatta, the Manhattan Island native Lenape’s word for “island of many hills,” recreates the Manhattan Island of 1609, which is the year Henry Hudson arrived. Sanderson drew heavily on Randel’s work, as his (Randel’s) field notes describe the flora, fauna and topography of that era.

Marguerite Holloway keeps the precise location of the original Randel iron pipe obscure, intentionally, I believe. I appreciate her sensitivity in wanting to preserve this historic two-hundred-year-old monument from vandalism. On our next trip to The Big Apple, I am going to attempt to find that iron pipe – perhaps even with her help and blessing. ■



## *It's Time To Grow Your Business Without Hiring*

By: Logan Campbell and Daniel Katz

*Logan Campbell and Daniel Katz are co-founders of Aerotas where they created the Aerotas Mapping System, a turn-key system including a UAV and processing solution, training, insurance, and regulatory compliance support. Learn more at [aerotas.com/dronesurvey](http://aerotas.com/dronesurvey)*

The 2017 construction season set records. The construction and development industries are back, and surveyors nationwide are feeling the effects, good and bad. Many survey businesses made more revenue than in years, but with this money came a whole new pressure: how to keep up with the suddenly booming market. We have heard countless stories from surveyors in every state struggling to keep up with an unprecedented workload, and all signs point to 2018 being even bigger.

After many years of stasis, the industry needs to grow. But growing a survey business presents a unique challenge: a nationwide shortage of hireable land surveyors.

This raises the question we hear land surveyors across the country struggling with: how can they grow their businesses with minimal hiring?

### *The answer is efficiency. Do more with less.*

The best way meet the growing demand is to use tools that enable your team to do more projects, faster, with a smaller staff and fewer resources. Used correctly, a drone is the ideal tool. An effective drone program will enable your business to complete projects in less field and office time, run smaller crews, reduce field revisits, and proactively collect data for future projects. The crucial sum of these benefits is that the firm can grow its project-load without needing to hire.

### *Do 5 times more projects with the same field team*

The right drone tool and the right operations can enable a survey team to say "yes" to five times as many projects without needing to hire a single additional field surveyor.

Surveyors we work with report completing the fieldwork for many topographic, as-built, and land title projects in 90% less time than if they had used conventional equipment. For example, a drone dramatically reduces the need for crews to walk slow grids for topographic mapping: whereas a proficient field surveyors can shoot 60 points an hour in the field, with the right software tools, the same 60 points would take less than a minute in the office.

All projects will still require some ground work -- a drone is best thought of as one tool in a hybrid workflow. However, that fieldwork is reduced to setting ground control and collecting any shots that need to be tighter than 0.1' accuracy or are not visible from the air -- work that can be completed by a solitary surveyor rather than a multi-person crew. The drone can be relied on for the appropriate portions of a job, then merged with data collected from field tools in post-processing, thereby still offering huge time savings.

Saving time is nice, but what actually matters is the larger implication for the business. If a project that would normally take a week can now be completed in less than a day, that means the field team can now complete as many as five projects in the time it would have taken to complete one. What's more, this tool does not require hiring for a new role. Though operating a drone involves a new skill-set, it does not require hiring a specialized operator. Comparable to becoming a car driver, with moderate professional training, we make a safe, reliable drone pilot of even the most technically unsavvy field surveyor.

### *Post-process without expanding office resources*

Surveying by drone involves rebalancing the proportions of project time from the field to the office. However, with the right workflow and using the right resources, the office time for getting to final line-work from drone data should take no more time than it would have if the job was completed with conventional equipment.

Many surveyors initially compare drone data to horror stories about laser scanner data requiring two hours of data processing for every one hour of field data collection. With the right software workflow, drone data can be processed to final line-work in no more time than when using conventional survey tools. One key tip: use post-processing tools that do not require working with a point cloud to extract line work.

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An additional key resource to leverage is outsourcing. The most efficient survey companies we work with will strategically outsource data processing on a project-by-project basis. If a project or client is highly sensitive, they will complete it in-house. If office staff are fully booked, they will outsource. They use their highly-trained and expensive in-house resources where they are going to provide the most benefit, and use inexpensive and fast outsourced options to save money everywhere else. Again, this means that an effective drone program can enable the office team to complete more projects, more flexibly, without additional hiring.

### **Reduce trips to the field**

One of the most valuable but under-considered benefits of the right drone program is that it makes it effortless to always collect more data. This translates to a reduction in field errors, and easy pre-collection of data for future projects.

When the drone data from a project site is processed, it functions as a complete record of the project site. The right software workflow then allows for shoot specific elevations or features from this digital record, in the office. This means that if a point is missed, miss-collected, or mislabeled, correcting the error is a matter of a few mouse-clicks, not a several-hour return-trip to the field.

The ease of drone data-collection also means that the firm can also easily collect more data than is needed for any specific project. One of our customers tells the story of a client who contracted them for a topo of the front half of his property. On a hunch, and with the addition of less than an hour in the field, the surveyor flew the drone over the entire property -- front and back. Sure enough, the client wound up asking for a topo of the back half of the property as well. The survey team was able to deliver this second project without another field visit, meaning their total time for completing this second project was measured in hours, not days.

Having an automatic complete record finally reduces that most costly and time-sucking issue of all: client disputes. Having a clear, high-resolution, visual record of the project site exactly as it existed on a specific day can prove an invaluable resource in efficiently resolving otherwise intractable disagreements.

By reducing errors, re-visits, and disputes, an effective drone program enables field crews and senior staff to stay focused on the most valuable work: winning and executing on new projects.

### **Grow without hiring, and excite the next generation**

The land surveying industry is in a critical moment. A booming construction economy portends huge growth for the industry, but a shortage of hireable surveyors threatens that growth. It is time for surveyors around the country to make an important shift in how they think about their businesses: it is time to focus on efficiency. And drones provide a unique opportunity for making this shift to efficiency.

But drones also offer another, more existential benefit to the industry: attracting new talent. The land survey industry gets an undue reputation for being technological laggards. In fact, the



industry has leveraged a steady march of ground-breaking new technologies: metric cameras, computer-aided drafting, GPS, laser scanners, robotic total stations, and now drones. But drones are different from these other technologies in one critical way: they have captured the public imagination.

For an industry with an average age in the late 50's, drones have the potential to solve a critical challenge: they can attract an entire new generation to land surveying. Few industries stand to benefit on a day-to-day basis from a technology that overlaps so closely with the newest hobby of so many young people. Not only is this technology enabling surveyors to grow their businesses without hiring today, it is spurring the future growth of the industry as a whole.

Do you have a question about drones? Submit your question and it may be answered in the next issue of the Evergreen State Surveyor. Email your question to [info@LSAW.org](mailto:info@LSAW.org) ■



# Affording a Surveying Education

By: Knud E. Hermansen, P.L.S., P.E., Ph.D., Esq.

I am a faculty member in the surveying program at the University of Maine and a parent of three college educated children. I am often asked, mostly by parents, what financial aid is available for their children. I will share the guidance I provide on the subject of how to afford a quality four-year surveying education.

**Apply for Surveying Scholarships** — Almost every state surveying society has scholarships available for aspiring surveyors. National professional societies such as the National Society of Professional Surveyors have scholarships available to students (<http://www.nspis.us.com/?page=Scholarships>). Scholarship committee members often lament how few scholarship applications they receive. The fact is that a majority of surveying students do not apply for the numerous surveying scholarships that are available.

In order to encourage students to apply for scholarships, I will often suggest to students that the hour or two that may be required to prepare a complete and quality application will often garner some of the best hourly pay the student will ever earn. To obtain a \$2,000 scholarship for two hours of effort is equivalent to \$1,000 per hour.

My advice is usually ignored. (I suspect if the parents heard my advice, more scholarship applications would be forthcoming from their children.) Accordingly, those students that do apply for a scholarship have an excellent chance to obtain a scholarship. The odds of receiving a scholarship are much better than any lottery.

**Apply for Work Related Scholarships** — Many employers offer scholarships to employees. In the past, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provided educational funding for students that worked for the BLM as summer survey interns. Several private surveying firms often provide scholarships to summer interns upon their return to college after working for the firm during the summer so long as there is a commitment to work for the firm in the future.

The most notable work related scholarships available to employees are National Guard and military reserve scholarships. Serving one weekend a month and two weeks a year will often provide a student with full tuition toward a four-year degree.

**Apply for General Scholarships** — Numerous colleges offer general scholarships to students. Scholarships are often available to students that are in certain disciplines, the residents of certain towns, members of certain minority ethnic groups, or have achieved notable academic standards.

**Community College** — Students can save considerable tuition expense by attending a community college. Tuition is often considerably less at community colleges when compared to the tuition for similar courses at a four-year university. Students should be encouraged to take as many credits as possible at a community college. Mathematics, English, speech, physics, and many other general subject classes can be taken at a community college. These courses will usually transfer to a four-year surveying program. If there is some doubt, check on transfer credits at the four-year program before taking the course at a community college.

Students that are intending to embark on a surveying career should consider getting an associate degree in surveying at a community college before transferring to a four year surveying degree program. In the alternative, the student can take almost all their general course work at a community college and take the engineering and surveying courses at a four-year college in order to complete a degree requirement leading to a bachelor of science degree in surveying.

**Advice to My Children** — While I have given this advice to many students and parents, parents are curious and have asked me what advice I gave to my own children. How did I handle financing my children's education? My advice to my three children was simple and direct. They could go to any college they could afford.

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I see so many young students enroll in university programs that have very little future for employment (not so in surveying). Students enrolled in majors without future employment prospects will pile up debt with little hope for paying off the student loans in a reasonable period, if at all. At least half of the students at the campus where I teach would have a much brighter economic future and more rewarding career had they gone to a technical school and learned a trade rather than attend a university where they majored in, for example, Medieval Literature.

To further compound their future financial difficulty, many students attend expensive private colleges where the students enroll in majors with little prospect for future employment.

My advice and opinions were communicated to my three children. My daughter and son became engineers. My youngest son is a nurse. All are gainfully employed without student

loan debt. Two financed their education with Army scholarships. One financed her electrical engineering education with a merit scholarship that covered all four years of her education.

In closing, you might ask how I funded my own education. I used the G.I. Bill (Marine Corp veteran). I followed the advice I gave. I earned a two-year degree before transferring to a four-year program. My graduate degrees were funded by my employment as a teaching assistant. I will also give credit to my wife who also worked to support the family while I attended college.

I hope this advice helps prospective students and parents. We need more surveying students. In 2016, surveying graduates had at least three employment offers each. Surveying is a great major and rewarding career. Encourage more students to enroll in a surveying program and give the prospective students and parents my advice. ■

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