



Humor in Surveying: The Winds of Change

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I recently—meaning last February—missed the CCPS (Central Colorado Professional Surveyors) annual weekend seminar. It's interesting how the word "recently" adjusts in meaning as we grow older, isn't it? There are usually some very good speakers at the seminar. I enjoy hearing them speak and learning new aspects about our chosen profession. A good surveyor is, after all, always learning. But this year I was especially disappointed about missing it because of the recent loss of a dear departed partner. I suffered this loss only a couple of weeks prior to the seminar and I was desperately hoping to be able to fill the void I was feeling with the fellowship I always experience at the seminar. But alas, I was busy with work and could not attend. The mild disappointment I felt at first over missing the seminar was soon overcome by a growing sense of irreplaceable loss.

You see, they give away free hats at this seminar each year. They're not really free because, as you know, they include that cost in the fee. I have worn a CCPS hat in the field for the last several years in order to shield my fair complexion from the intense sun we experience out here at one mile of elevation. I replenish my hat annually at the seminar, so as you can imagine, by the time that seminar comes back around each year, I'm in desperate need of a new hat. This year in particular I was very much looking forward to replacing my hat because I had lost last year's hat just two weeks prior to the seminar in a bizarre hat incident. You may be asking yourself right about now just what exactly a "bizarre hat incident" is, so I'll tell you.

We survey in the mountains out here and those mountains contain wind, sometimes strong and sometimes "squirrely." I was involved in one of those great surveys that we all dream of up in the mountains. Winter surveying in the mountains means snowshoes and back country. It was fantastically beautiful and it took me right to the top of a precipice where I was able to locate a section corner that would greatly facilitate my determinations. But I just couldn't leave. It was truly too beautiful to go until I sat for a while and just took in the view. As I sat there, a great gust of wind came up the side of that precipice and, of course, took my hat right off my head. Now that wasn't the first time that hat and I had been parted, but it ended up being the last because it blew straight up . . . and up . . . and up . . . until it went right out of sight, apparently on a solo journey to survey heaven.

Since then my head just hasn't felt right. I haven't been able to find a suitable replacement for that old departed partner. You may be able to picture my emotional condition, but I'm not sure that your imagination, or anyone's for that matter, could truly do justice to my downtrodden state. Now I know that hat had done its duty. We traveled many miles together in vehicles and on foot. We forded many a stream and warded off more than a couple of dangers. If any hat deserved to go out in such a fashion it was that one. Now that it's gone though, I need to fill the void left behind, and I know some of you are saying "below," that hat.

My wife has been completely supportive. As you can all sympathize, she looks forward every year to me replacing my hat. After a full year of dutiful service the state of my hats are always . . . unkempt. Usually my old hats enjoy retirement in my collector's corner where they all reminisce about their surveying experiences, just like we human surveyors are prone to do. Often they get into arguments with my old work boots over which

contributed more to the success of various surveys we have performed together. I try to stay out of it, myself. It can get pretty ugly.

So as I've plodded along in my daily work routine lately, attempting in vain to recover the spring in my step, lamenting the notion that I am destined to spend a full year in search of a new, reliable faith-ful companion of a hat, trying desperately to keep my spirits up in spite of my deep emotional loss, and hoping beyond hope that I can somehow find the temerity to survive the upcoming year of hard field work in these extreme conditions without my faithful companion, it finally occurred to me that there may be a solution to my dilemma after all. That solution, which you may have already surmised, depends on you, my faithful readers. My very destiny is in your hands. (Take a deep breath, if you need to, before continuing on.)

Do any of you think that you can somehow find the compassion, let alone the revenue, to help me solve this problem by providing me with a year's supply of hats? My heart would truly soar if that could be so. If you feel so inclined, you can send your contribution to me via *Professional Surveyor Magazine*.

You know, now that I've broached this subject, I'm beginning to look over my closet of work shirts, too.

P.S. If any of you "back east" run into the remains of "old reliable" please provide him a burial service worthy of a surveyor of distinction. After all, it is a far, far better world that he goes to than he has ever known.

About the Author



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