

SURVEYOR

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CAREER DAY with

“RAMONA” the

ROBOT



David A. Crivelli, PLS



Dylan Kolstad, PLS

We're a dying breed, more people are retiring than entering land surveying careers and the demand for our work has never been greater. You can't find any qualified help and enrollment in surveying programs is down. You've all heard it before; but what can you do to help?

Last May I got an opportunity by introducing careers in land surveying to my son's eighth grade class at Pacific Union School. The presentation was part of a weekly "career day" unit in the Junior High School he attended. When Sam asked me to present my profession to his class, I was happy and excited to participate. The next thought I had was "What am I going to say?"

This task was made easier by the 5 minute DVD entitled "Choose Your Path...Make Your Mark" on land surveying careers recently released by the CLSA Central Office. This DVD, introduced by our President, Robert Reese, at the March 2006 CLSA Conference in Reno, made my job much easier.

I decided to build my presentation around the DVD. The quality of this production is impressive; it includes special effects, informs the students of all aspects of modern surveying, and introduces several career paths to enter the profession. I also thought it would be fun to dress up my Leica robotic total station (we've nicknamed her "Ramona") with a mop wig and red lips to demonstrate a state of the art surveying instrument, and to interject some humor into my presentation.

Before the kids arrived in class, Dylan Kolstad and I set up the instrument and various prisms around the class room. As the kids filed in, Dylan manipulated "Ramona's" viewpoint from behind a podium using the Allegro remote control data collector. Whenever someone would comment on her funny wig or large red lips, Dylan would direct her to "look" at them. This proved very entertaining and also got all the kids attention as the class started.

I started by talking about the need for land surveyors and that my goal was to convince at least two people in the class to become land surveyors. I told them if they like math, history, computers, and being outside "it's the only job for you". I went on to give a brief description of the contributions to surveying by the Egyptians, the Romans, and Napoleon's self proclaimed greatest achievement in civilization, the first European Cadastre. I then talked about the creation of the United States Public Land Surveying System, and what our earlier surveyors accomplished. Using the DVD, I discussed what was shown in the DVD on what surveyors do, opportunities in land surveying, and the various career paths.

We ended the presentation by having Ramona the robot double some angles and demonstrate how she follows the

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prism around the room. We then played a guessing game by using the laser pointer and reflectorless distance measuring function to shoot distances to the corner of the ceiling. Loli Pops were awarded to those who guessed the correct horizontal and vertical distances.

I was surprised that many people in the class had no clue as to what land surveyors do; my son's teacher included. She had the students write thank you notes. The students thanked us for teaching them about the land surveying profession. Many included sketches of Ramona and one, my favorite, with a surveyor jumping in the air, clicking his heels, with dollar bills floating around him. The presentation to these sixty kids proved to be very rewarding.

We brought some pictures and a few of the thank you notes to the Humboldt Chapter June meeting and discussed the presentation. Several members of our chapter expressed interest in continuing this effort into this coming school year. We formed a committee and met in July to discuss career day talks and how to incorporate Trig Star into the high schools. We have divided up into teams of two and will be contacting career counselors at every high school in the County. We plan on informing career counselors of the opportunities in surveying, doing career day talks, and contacting Math teachers this September to set up a Trig Star program. We will also be contacting the local Junior College and State College for career day presentations.

We must reach out to our youth to begin bringing in more surveyors into our profession. I encourage all Chapters to take advantage of the new DVD, "Choose Your Path.. Make Your Mark" and set up presentations to inform young people about our exciting profession. ❖

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