

ACSM/NMPS Student Chapter Hosts Noted Surveyor/Historian

by: Earl F. Burkholder, Faculty Advisor

The ACSM/NMPS Student Chapter in the Surveying Engineering Department at New Mexico State University hosted Mr. David L. Ingram, for a series of presentations on March 28 & 29, 2004. Sunday afternoon is not a good time for continuing education seminars, but Mr. Ingram took advantage of a lower weekend airfare on his trip to visit the Student Chapter and was in Las Cruces anyway. He volunteered to donate his time to present a seminar that the Student Chapter could use as a fund-raiser for their upcoming trip to the ACSM Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee in April. The 4-hour seminar on "Situational Ethics for Surveyors" was presented on Sunday afternoon, March 28, 2004, and was attended by local professionals and technicians as well as persons from Silver City, Ruidoso, and El Paso. Mr. Ingram gave a thought provoking presentation on ethical concepts and led an interesting discussion of case studies. One of the more notable quotes is, "Is the existence of a code of ethics evidence that we need one?"

On Monday morning, Mr. Ingram made a presentation to Dr. Frank's Surveying Fundamentals class on "Historical surveying instruments as related to surveying history in the United States." On Monday afternoon he gave a presentation on "Retracement of the Fairfax Line" (in Virginia) to Professor Burkholder's Satellite Geodesy class and described how GPS was used on the project. It was an excellent example to show how modern technology can be used to help locate and evaluate evidence left by our professional ancestors – in this case over 250 years ago.

But, the real reason for Mr. Ingram's visit was his presentation to the ACSM/NMPS Student Chapter meeting on Monday evening. Mr. Ingram gave a very informative talk on surveying compasses, chains, and solar compasses. He described the features and construction of various instruments and discussed the times and conditions in which the instruments were used. The presentation provided an excellent historical perspective and helps balance a tendency in academia to focus too heavily on the use of modern technology. Given that students from NMSU are preparing for the Student Chaining Competition at the Annual ACSM Meeting in Nashville, the presentation was particularly timely and beneficial. However, as one of the judges for the student competition, Mr. Ingram was careful not to

provide any "inside" information that might be used to an unfair advantage. Incidentally, the NMSU Team prepared and submitted the written paper part of the competition to ACSM Headquarters prior to Mr. Ingram's visit. But, Mr. Ingram did offer this advice – practice, practice, practice.

Mr. Ingram is a licensed surveyor in Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland and is a managing partner of a private practice in Mt Crawford, Virginia. He is an active member of several state professional organizations as well as the American Congress on Surveying & Mapping and the Surveyors' Historical Society. As a program evaluator for ABET, Mr. Ingram has had the opportunity to visit numerous surveying programs through-

out the USA. That, added to his own background, gives him a valuable insight to educating students to run a successful surveying practice. But, Mr. Ingram is probably best known as a surveying historian and for his indefatigable support for the Museum of Surveying located in Lansing, Michigan. As a pilot and trustee of the Museum, he makes numerous flying trips to Michigan each year and as a historian, he is actively engaged in developing the instrument and document collections in the Museum. Not surprising, he closed each presentation with a challenge for each person to help preserve the legacy of surveying for future generations by supporting the capital campaign of the Museum. See www.surveyhistory.org for more information.

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