

Standards of Fare or Standards of Care? And Related Professional Dilemmas

BY GEORGE LOEWEN, O.L.S.

I was recently reminded of another one of those innumerable human dichotomies: on the one hand are those people who see something sinister, that must be prevented at all costs, in skinning a cat without pulling its anus downward over its head and, on the other, those who can envision other ways of obtaining as useful a result without -- well -- stretching the subject matter to quite that extreme. The occasion for this insight was a perusal of a circular from our association inviting comments on a document entitled "Draft Performance Standards Regulation and Draft Interpretive Guide and Supplement", in which those "stretchers" in our profession not only propose to instruct us in the correct way to skin the proverbial cat, but also insist on telling us how we are to interpret (read: understand) the language of that instruction lest it be perverted by our shortcomings in divining the intended meaning their wielding of it should eventually prove unequal to expressing. And because these stretchers have thereby shown themselves to be such sober literalists, I rush to placate them with the assurance that where cats are concerned I am writing only figuratively, if not altogether facetiously.

For only the second time in some twenty years (a really decent respite from this type of harassment, come to think of it, for which we all ought to be grateful) the members of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors have been presented with the opportunity of reviewing a new set of "Survey Standards" intended for eventual induction into law as regulations under the Surveyors Act. Now, as before, it seems to have raised little if any alarm among the membership that, so far from resembling anything that could approach the conventional concept of professional standards, these regulations are and purport to be nothing less than an exercise in didactic prescription. Not that notice should escape anyone of this set's enormous editorial improvement over the earlier, pioneer-

ing one, which was a laborious compendium of everything redolent of land surveying, painstakingly winnowed and arranged for handy reference from the statutes and regulations of this province, with here and there an also thrown-in pinch of editorial opinion, nugget of misinformation or gratuitous peremptory edict. That set was nonetheless clasped to the bosom of the association in a popular collective decision of its members and became a landmark in its development, possibly because it set before the startled eyes of many somnolent practitioners a panoply of their statutory obligations many of which they had rarely taken the trouble to observe in such close and cogent juxtaposition with one another, if in fact at all. Indeed so deeply were those old standards absorbed into the O.L.S. psyche that virtually none of their foibles were ever challenged formally, allowing them to pass pristine into that great rubbish heap of superseded laws in the sky, from which however -- fear not -- they are still to be capable of being channelled with the help of a brand new concordance linking them to the brand new Performance Standards now before us, for purposes I would credit only charity with the capacity for enduring the mawkishness of.

Now, if I said that these new "standards" are an improvement over the old, the relief they afford is only that of the corn plaster compared with the better-fitted shoe, for they still pinch where they should rather support. That the failure to recognize this distinction should come about can only be due to ignorance about what professions and professional standards are, and the fact that it should persist can therefore only be due to the lack of continuing education. Come to think of it, the very perception that there could be a need for explicit regulations on professional behaviour can only be due to a lack of professional education. Most of the basis for what is in this draft of 'performance standards' should have been so ingrained in the professional candidate

that it could safely be taken for granted by the time of that candidate's induction into professional membership. It is therefore material that belongs in a syllabus or handbook of technical instruction, not in the standards of professional performance, which deal with the sufficiency and probity of performance rather than with the details of its method.

Those surveyors who are not yet comfortable with the concept of professionalism as a disciplinary mode that is responsible to the public, would be well-advised to consult some of what acknowledged authorities on the subject have written. For conciseness and timeliness, G.K. Allred's admirable chapter in *Survey Law in Canada*, entitled "The Surveying Profession", commands wide attention and has the advantage, moreover, of being in all likelihood within reach of most informed surveyors and, with near certainty, of those who would presume on behalf of their peers to write standards that they could expose unblushing beside the Model Code of Ethics of the Canadian Council of Land Surveyors in Appendix "A". Even a scan of the already short essay on "Concepts of Professionalism" in this chapter cannot fail to confront the reader with its salient tenets. Professional surveyors are seen as governed primarily "by their own integrity and ethical standards" even though they enjoy certain privileges that must subject them to a more rigorous discipline than that which applies to lay persons. Note that this is not the discipline of the drillmaster nor even of the grade school where any rigour is a consequence merely of regimentation, beyond the reach of which our standards writers still cannot seem to imagine themselves or their colleagues to be trustworthy of licence. It is much rather the self-imposed discipline of an alliance of experts in the arcana of a craft practised in the public interest but too abstruse for public currency, for which reason the administration of its practice has been entrusted to this alliance

in return for self-government, monopoly rights and certain other privileges collateral with its efficient delivery to the public at large. The public bestows this trust content in not knowing the details of how this expert service is done, but needs to be sure that it is done openly, honestly, and with the highest achievable competence of its practitioners, though not necessarily to their best liking, convenience or profit. For this reason we are often reminded that as professionals we are entrepreneurs with an inverted order of priorities, starting with principle and descending through people and products to profit as the last consideration.

What, then, does this state of affairs leave us, the profession, in the way of resources to enable us to prosper? Why, everything, provided we allow ourselves the same liberty of our own resourcefulness of method and invention that the public has already bestowed upon our alliance, instead of herding ourselves like sheep, or worse, stampeding ourselves like lemmings, by investing our hopes in lock step stratagems to maintain discipline and competence in our profession. In short, let us allow our more innovative practitioners to skin their cats in unorthodox ways in the trust that they may devise techniques both more efficient and cheaper to the public than conventional ones, while rendering our profession more competitive with other disciplines whose practitioners will not hesitate to usurp what they can in our bailiwick.

But let us be sure of the education and training of our prospective members before we admit them and let us simply not admit those who do not measure up when they apply, taking to heart the maxim of Madame Justice Wilson of the Supreme Court of Canada quoted by Mr. Allred (ibid.): "membership in a profession should be in and of itself a guarantee of competence". Thereafter, let us periodically monitor the work and test the current knowledge of our members, especially of those from whom nothing is ever heard in a professional context other than dues and who may for all we know not be operating on life-support systems based upon oxygen let alone professional ethics. If we do not know what they are doing how can we ever assure the public that it is alright to entrust them with its money and real property.

While we are discussing standards, let us not forget something that has

long been an embarrassment to our profession, namely its utter lack of formal concern with the competence, education and monitoring of the technical staff that is actually being relied upon to collect and process so much of the professional services we deliver. This assuredly is part of our professional responsibility and should be subject to as clear a standard as the surveyor's; but instead of some direct enunciation of it in our "Code of Ethics" or "Standards of Practice" in Ontario Regulation 726/88, we have only the proscription of "Professional Misconduct", including, among other things, "Failure to engage staff deemed competent", etc. (Sec.35(8)), which leaves that issue for Complaints and Discipline Committees to deal with as the exceptions to a rule defined in terms too vague to give it dominion. Here then, is substance for a real standard of which, again, there is not even a token acknowledgement in these new draft regulations.

*"... as professionals
we are entrepreneurs
with an
inverted order of priorities,
starting with principle ..."*

And we should not hear of I.S.T.O. as a palliative here, notwithstanding those who now vaunt the gums in its muzzle where its sometime forerunner A.C.S.T.T.O. had no teeth, for I much fear that the sorry legacy of our profession's relationship to its helpers, who stand more nearly in the place of collaborators, will not improve until we confront and vanquish the hypocrisy of the surveyor in the storefront enjoying a banquet of profit and glory, with the helper in the backroom or basement having to make do with the crumbs (although in recent times the banquets have degenerated into brown-bag affairs often depriving those helpers of even that crumbly fare). Perhaps it comes down to deciding in dispassionate terms just how much less deserving, economically, the co-worker is without those three magic letters behind the name and, even taking into account the added responsibility they betoken, how much that diminution consequently will erode the quality of the product and depreciate the price it can be expected to command. There

ought to be no longer any doubt that the image of our profession in the eye of the public will depend as much on the manner, appearance and deportment of its tawdriest crew member as on that of its most suave professional, and yet somewhere in this equation there lies an unknown for which we have been unable to solve.

On September 23, 1993, an open letter to the A.O.L.S. membership was circulated on behalf of Messrs. Rody, Searles, Simmonds, Statham and Whale (no practising partnership implied), proposing a "Technical Associate Role" under the vertical structuring mechanisms available under the Surveyors Act. This proposal offers a partial solution, but ultimately abandons its most promising potentials with the dilution that this new role "may bring no statutory rights or privileges" even though the letter recognizes "that the time has come for change through the provision of a technical classification within the A.O.L.S.", which does, finally, qualify as a hammer blow of insight on the nail steadied by the thumb instead of merely growing out of it.

How difficult can it be to set up the mechanism for admitting our technicians into the hierarchic authority structure of the association, when we already have the earlier models of the O.L.S. Apprenticeship programs to guide us? All that we need would be syllabi for education, a committee for evaluating experience and a judicious set of examinations for admittance to technical certification under one or more of the constituent A.O.L.S. professional disciplines, at one or more levels of competence. This certification of technical assistants could then itself become a stipulation in our performance standards for specified classes of paraprofessional surveyors. But, clearly, it neither serves the Association's best interests nor discharges its public responsibilities to rely upon an even partly autonomous association such as I.S.T.O. to set up certification norms that are intended to be entrained by, and must therefore be wholly subordinate to, the professional process. If I.S.T.O. is to train or certify, it must be wholly to A.O.L.S. specifications and approval. In short, the participation of certified paraprofessionals in the plenary professional milieu can be quite unfettered as long as the control of the enterprise remains firmly in professional hands. And we should not overlook the symbiotic or financial advantages that a

swelled membership composed of professionals and an even greater number of para-professionals would bestow upon the profession. The main thing holding us back from this venture, I feel, is our traditional timidity and trepidation in the face of any change from the status quo and by now, one would think, with so many new members replenishing our numbers, a new outlook might finally keep these spectres in check.

But even as I wrestle down these rhetorical spasms for the moment, I still feel the compulsion to emphasize that our cavil with these draft performance regulations, which themselves are squarely in the cadastral domain, should also extend to the inevitable parallel conceptions for our other professional domains if their procreators were to exhibit the same procrustean callowness and jealous despotic strabismus as those of this brood of decrees in embryo now besetting us with its desperate need of obstetric intervention. Because, I fear, not even scientific training confers immunity to the "stretcher" syndrome, which can be deemed a malaise neither of the intellect nor even of the mind, but rather of the spirit.

Of course, if my allusion to ocular disorders, embryos and obstetrics give cause for anxiety, I give my solemn promise that I am writing only figuratively, if not altogether facetiously.

I therefore propose, now, to mount these draft regulations as a specimen of their order for a bit of poking and pecking, if not for outright dissection. Right off, we note that with their mock-legalistic definitions and tone, these regulations attempt to pass off as standards what are little more than specifications, and narrow ones at that. Had they been proper standards, those terms, instead of needing to be defined, would take on meanings contemporaneous with the changing professional norms from time to time and would continue to be as commonly understood as any current professional terms in actual use. And this would, incidentally, have limited the opportunity for such hapless catachresis as the babble defining "astronomic", an adjective, as an "observation", a noun, in the opening sentence of Part I.

Done away with also would be such pointlessly narrow or inane definitions as that restricting "imperial units" to the foot and its decimals as though the use of "imperial" invoked something regal, of itself commanding deference,

instead of merely implying the quondam British Empire that tolerated chains, links, yards, rods and inches besides a swarm of other units of measure that seems to have gone down with its sun; or the one defining "co-ordinate survey" in terms neither intrinsic to the nature of what may have been intended nor descriptive of its essential attributes, but rather in terms merely of its purpose and the form of its data, which is queasily like describing an "omelet chicken" as a chicken created for the purpose of laying eggs expressly for the making of omelets. As the definition now stands, the "co-ordinate survey" is, moreover, unfettered by considerations of reliability, accuracy or types of "grid co-ordinates", which is like explaining an enigma with a clutch of riddles. Perhaps a geodetic or other precise, or controlled, survey is intended? In any case, once the required accuracy or other constraint is specified for a survey, it must be the professional's responsibility to translate that specification into an expression of scientific expectations and the measures necessary to achieve it. Any flicker of failure here is the failure of professionalism itself, not the failure of adherence to chapter and verse of a reel of rote wound up as a pitiful excuse for it and also, incidentally, for a switch to bring my train of digressions right back on track into 'Part II - Field Survey Standards'.

*"Done away with also
would be such ... inane
definitions as that
restricting "imperial units"
to the foot ..."*

Section 2, while setting the context as "cadastral surveying" which ought to be already understood as being the context of the entire set of draft regulations, also specifies the "licensed member" as though it could have relevance for the non-licensed one under the current Surveyors Act.

What does Section 3 accomplish that the required education and other qualification for licensure would not already better and more thoroughly have rendered the surveyor fit to understand or to exercise her or his professional judgement upon? In any context where that judgement matters, the concerns addressed by this section will be

brought to bear by authorities who will feel neither the need for them nor for being bound by them; unless, of course, this section is intended to snare unwary prey for an eventual inquisition after our "stretchers" have finished practising on figurative cats and are then beginning to look about for more substantial stand-ins with bigger heads to hone their skills upon. In short, licensed surveyors cannot help being insulted by this uncalled for, patronizing pabulum and unlicensed ones ashamed to stand by and watch it being administered to their brethren. Or sistren.

This outrage applies with varying vehemence to Sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. In Section 4, for example, where are the warrants for this arbitrary and wholly inept piece of dictation? The fact that closure errors were so dictated in previous legislation might have served the purposes of those who had to administer it, but on that account alone provides no reasonable professional excuse for its being parroted as a regulation for general purposes. Has it not already for some time seemed to others than myself a bit of an irrelevance to be held by the hand in so mundane and, may I say, simple-minded a perception of survey error? And even if some sort of empirico-statistical scale of expectations of error could be derived *under specified conditions*, could not - should not the professional surveyors as experts in just this sort of thing rather be expected on their own recognizance to meet ordinary scientific error expectations, knowing the capacity of their instruments and the conditions affecting their observations? That this elementary precaution should be expected of their work ought to be the essence of a standard, instead of some arbitrary yardstick for every purpose.

What, other than draft Section 5, gives concern of how bearings are derived, as long as they are able to meet specified error expectations, are scientifically derived and are of the genre "geographic" (not necessarily astronomic). Why should our standards concern themselves with the method of derivation? Even as I write, Global Positioning Systems, not mentioned in the draft, are becoming a common technology for azimuth as well as position determination.

Section 6 is self-evident and need not be restricted to the requirements of Section 21. Section 7 is even more self-evident. Section 8 belongs elsewhere, as I intend to explain, and in fact, ex-

cept for Section 9 which comes as close to a standard as anything in this draft, all the rest of it belongs either to the genre "handbook" or "regulation in the service of special legislation".

It is not hard to see and idle to refute the need for much of what is contained in 'Part III - Plans' as a sort of norm that would make a surveyors' plans recognizable and intelligible to those, especially non-surveyors, who must use them. In fact, there is often room for more than one norm, something which had been demonstrated as early as 1066 A.D. to other ends and, rather more recently in the case of our "Surveyor's Real Property Report", to serve and exploit the market for surveys. If these norms are developed and advertised as standard products (not as standards; the word has several meanings) of the profession, one would expect the membership to follow their specifications when delivering them, for not to do so when purporting to deliver such a product would be misleading if not fraudulent, a professional misdemeanour already well-covered by current regulations under the Surveyors Act. Any number of such standard products could be developed, identified and made available to the membership in handbooks, manuals and other special publications for that purpose. But they do not have to be edicts or even regulations; they should be options with an onus to conform if used.

Handbooks can be developed, also, outlining technical methods recommended or sanctioned by the Association, or even defensible by it, but it should be clear that the signing surveyor must ultimately take *all* responsibility for the extent and execution of their application. And while it is true that this responsibility can be somewhat attenuated if these methods are entrenched in regulations, it will be at the considerable sacrifice of our individual independence and entail progress in lock step pace with only the lowest common denominator in practice. I, for one, do not feel my heart swell at such a prospect, not even if I could not aspire to rise above the level of that denominator. Such regulations also tend to indict the innovative nonconformist irrespective of competence.

But by far the most damaging effect these regulations can have is the pathetic impression of our expertise that their handful of sparsely-printed pages must give to the innocent lay person who could surely be forgiven for

mistaking them as the essence if not the sum total of instructions necessary for running what can easily be perceived as the universe of the cadastral surveyor's expertise and activity, a universe that on this evidence appears to make up in imagination, substance and sheer bulk somewhat less than could fill a brown envelope and, in addition to this, is surpassed in complexity by the instruction manual packaged with the average video recorder.

"Why, then, do we allow ourselves to be manipulated like tradespeople, accepting as evidence the assurance of every entrepreneur that takes it for a birthright to earn money by dealing with land?"

To the non-initiate, regulations such as these are indistinguishable from the mechanical instructions of the tradesman's manual with whose station our profession seems bent on inviting comparison. Not that this proclivity is checked by the practice of charging fees or retainers for the delivery of expertise more proportional to its intrinsic supply value and the size of the risk exposure it engenders. The former reflects a sizable long-term investment of time, education and experience, while the latter reflects the latent hypothecation of the professionals' earnings and assets for an unforeseeable time into the future.

Why, then, do we allow ourselves to be manipulated like tradespeople, accepting as evidence the assurance of every entrepreneur that takes it for a birthright to earn money by dealing with land? Obviously, we are and have been allowing our products to be defined and controlled not by our training, education, professional judgement or conscience, but by intermediaries (not even kingpins) in profiteering. There is another name for this manner of transaction, but it escapes me, as indeed our current fiscal modus operandi should escape our profession.

Well, most of us have never experienced such a set-back as the current economic downturn has delivered, and our profession is now tasting the full flavour of the sub in the subordinate role it has allowed itself to be manoeuvred into. Because we cannot

go anywhere but upwards, this seems like a good opportunity to work on the standards *behind* what goes on the plan, the report, et cetera, rather than dwelling on what external form they take and what rules they follow. For this we would need fewer regulations and more professional seminars, workshops and exemplars. We also need to jettison our preoccupation with the external forms and protocols of our professional service (i.e. types of plans, certificates, prescribed procedures to follow etc.) as definitive of our professional practice and concentrate on those fundamentals of this practice that never appear on these forms and yet make up its essential nature. But we cannot do this with regulation; it requires training, self-examination and continual educational development.

Finally, whatever became of the halcyon days when most detailed regulations, such as we now see in draft Part III, were prepared and seen to be required expressly for the administration of special government institutions such as the Land Registration systems, Mining regulation and other land-related concerns?

Even if these transgressed heavily on the proper domain of the profession, they seem to have been constructed with the aid and connivance of senior members of the Association and to the applause of its members at large. "Our" people in government were, and in many quarters still are, seen as representing the Association's best interests from their coign of vantage near the levers of power, and there is every indication that their past concern and efforts with survey standards made up for much of what the resources of our association were unequal to addressing at that time. But, not to lose the point of this reference, regulations as detailed as appear to be necessary for plans are, and should be viewed as, simply the specifications of their users and not as the standards of a profession that, in any case, could be expected to have resources of expertise and its delivery sufficient to generate a far broader spectrum of special products, graphic ones among many others, than just a handful of plan stereotypes. Bearing this fact in mind, it should not be too difficult for government ministries to refrain in their regulatory exercises from trespassing upon ground that is already under the governance of the Association, and upon which, I am sure, they could readily obtain guided

tours and free advice. Viewed in this light, it becomes clear also that the "Surveyor's Real Property Report" is simply *one* of those standard products that the Association has agreed to proffer, in this case to the real estate industry, and it is a sad observation on a professional sell-out to note that it should have been so overblown in importance as to compromise far more important monumentation regulations under the Surveys Act, a statute in as broad a public interest as our profession could ever be subjected to.

With this attempt to expose this draft of "performance standards" as really nothing more than the unpedigreed offspring of specialty regulations and technical handbook excerpts, only Section 9 (field notes) and possibly 25 (certificate) showing the bloodlines of a standard, I seem to have manoeuvred myself into having to

produce and exhibit a few specimens of the genus "professional standard". But before I tip my hand, let me just distance myself from any imputations that I consider myself especially or even sufficiently qualified to lay down a final draft of such a standard; of such persons as are we have enough in our Association - but they somehow are never asked or never seem to volunteer or are crowded out by those who think they not only know better but know the best way to do it -- their way -- and by Jove, the way everyone must be made to follow. I can, however, recognize a standard when I see, hear or smell one just as I can distinguish a good joke, without being able to write one, from a bad joke viz. these proposed performance standards.

Oh, and by the way, before I start, I hope that no one by now still expects me to apotheosize the encyclopedic ir-

relevance of the "interpretive" guides and supplements and of the outline of changes: for these "draft standards" we need guides and explanations with roughly the same urgency as we need them for the wallpaper in our offices.

Well then, a standard of professional performance is a paradigm of behaviour for its adherents, setting certain norms for the quality, extent and manner of delivery of an expert service consistent with the reasonable expectations of its recipients and of the general public, and within the requirements of the law. Now in these "reasonable expectations of its recipients and of the general public" there are obviously volumes of unexpressed but implied conditions. Broadly speaking, professional land surveyors will be expected to:

cont'd over

- a) Know and remain informed of the field of expertise of their licence and to be competent in its current conventions.
- b) Explain to the client, in terms that client can signify his or her comprehension of, the nature and effect of the expert service proposed to fill the requirements of the client, taking into account the rights of all other persons affected thereby, in compliance with the law, and the fee therefor.
- c) Deal honestly forthrightly and honourably with their clients, eschewing all duplicity, deceit, misleading communication, and suppression of information relevant to these clients' interests.
- d) Keep their clients informed of developments in the contracted work and to respond to their concerns during the course of this work.
- e) Divulge no confidential information of their clients and to assume responsibility for recognizing such information.
- f) Uphold and follow the tenets and standards of their professional body, and bring to its attention any gross or persistent violations thereof.
- g) Treat their fellow professionals with deference in all matters involving professional discretion; never disparaging them, and consult them in all matters that could lead or may appear to lead to conflicting professional actions or opinions because of misunderstanding.
- h) Devote a reasonable amount of their time and effort, without compensation, to furthering the good interests of their professional association.
- i) Signify by their signature on a document, or by their apparent agency in an endeavour with which they associate their name in a compromising way, their assumption of professional responsibilities for any professional act reasonably imputable to them thereby; and to be always vigilant of such contingencies.
- j) Undertake the rendering of advice only upon matters and provide services only on projects in which they have full justification to believe themselves to be expert in.
- k) Certify only work and advice, and associate themselves responsibly only with expert products, which they have unmitigated professional knowledge of and confidence in.
- l) Keep themselves informed, and as competent as required by their undertakings, of changes in theory, technology, techniques and conventions in their profession and their areas of expertise, and seek out or submit to tests, courses of study, co-operative ventures and other measures designed to monitor, refresh or advance their skills therein.
- m) Monitor continually, and undertake at all times to ensure the proper training, competence and adequacy of performance of, their employees and assistants who produce work, materials and services for which, they as professionals, accept compensation from their clients and full responsibility before the general public.
- n) At all times conduct their practice and all affairs impinging upon it in a manner free of advocacy of the rights and interests of any person whosoever, but always from the point of view of arbitrators working at the instigation, merely, of their clientele.
- o) Prepare direct, scrupulous and intelligible records of all their professional actions, observations and evidence-gathering concurrently with it and maintain them safely in readily accessible storage for display to all persons entitled to review them.
- p) Prepare and maintain records of all professional decisions together with sufficient rationale and supporting evidence to explain them.
- q) Test, calibrate, monitor and verify continually the reliable operation of all technical instruments and machines used for making measurements and record the confidence range of their individual errors, and record their use in all those professional processes in which they were employed.

If this incomplete list is neither polished, nor clearly representative of a well-defined genre, say, ethics or performance standards; if much of it is already to be found in the Surveyors Act or the Regulations under it: nevertheless, it ought to give some idea of how its elements differ categorically from those we typically see in the new draft regulations, that is to say, by avoiding mundane details such as numbers or formulae, offensive rote and demeaning rules of thumb, and, last but not least, Occam's unnecessary multiplication of entities.

In summing up this expostulation - turned - tirade, I remind my readers that they will soon be asked to vote for or against a version of the "Performance Standards" that provoked it, a version for the redemption of which in

due course I can muster fervent hope but only trifling optimism, and I therefore, bequeath them the following vignette as an amulet.

It is in bas-relief: a great, bleating throng of sheep are surging out of the horizon towards a steep precipice in the foreground, over the edge of which their vanguard plunges helter-skelter like some Niagara. In the middle of this throng is a single sheep clearly threading its way against the great tide and, in a long-stemmed balloon of dialogue rising from it high above this disaster scene are the words, "excuse me ---, excuse me ---, excuse me ---".

Of course, where sheep are concerned, I am writing only figuratively, if not altogether facetiously.



George ("George") Loewen was born in the Ukraine in 1936 and, by way of Poland and Germany, came to Canada with his family in 1948.

He received his O.L.S. licence in 1964 after apprenticing with the late R. Blake Erwin in Niagara Falls. His surveying experience has taken him throughout southwestern Ontario, to British Honduras (now Belize) with Canadian External Aid, and to Edmonton. He has chaired his Regional Group and the AOLS Standards Committee.

George and his wife Lenna (having raised three daughters and a son) live in St. Catharines, where he has been employed as Municipal Surveyor by the City since 1970. In addition to boundary retracement, his interests, eclectic and always desultory, include walking, cycling and classical music.