



Southwestern Environmental Consultants

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SURVEYORS · CIVIL ENGINEERS · LAND PLANNERS · NATURAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS

"Growth is inevitable...it's planning that makes the difference"

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IF THERE IS A SURVEYING TOPIC YOU WOULD LIKE ADDRESSED,
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EMAIL HIM AT: patrick@sec-landmgt.com AND LET HIM KNOW!

Good deal – Bad deal?

What makes a deal good or bad? I suppose it depends on which side of the fence you're standing on at the time, or maybe how you feel about the deal after it's consummated. There have been some historic killer real estate deals, and I'm sure we all wish we could have had a piece of the action, in one form or another.

Probably the most significant real estate deal ever made, in terms of area acquired, was The Louisiana Purchase in 1803. By a single stroke of the pen, the area of this country almost doubled. We gained over 800,000 square miles, or 512,000,000 acres for a mere \$15 million. That equates to approximately \$34 per acre.

Which side of the fence?

For us (U.S.), this was obviously a tremendous deal. For France, probably not. We just happened to be standing on the right side of the fence. Maybe Thomas Jefferson had a premonition of France's political leanings even way back then. But, since this is not a forum for political discussion, and given that half of my heritage is French, we won't go there.

Big things – Small packages

In terms of the biggest bang for the buck on a real estate deal, perhaps the largest return for the least amount of investment was when we pur-

chased Manhattan Island in 1626 for the equivalent of \$24. Yes, that's **dollars!** Not much in terms of a real estate commission on that one, but wouldn't you have loved to trade off an acre or so of land in exchange for the commission!

When is a corner not a corner?

When it's a monument! What's the difference? Semantics, mainly. The two terms are often used interchangeably, but only primarily by the survey community. By strict interpretation, a corner is an imaginary point. A monument is what is placed in the ground to represent the position of the corner. Monuments can be classed as *natural* or *artificial*. An example of a natural monument would be a river, a creek or even a tree. Artificial monuments can be just about anything. Typical examples are rebar, iron pipes, Brass Caps, stones, etc.

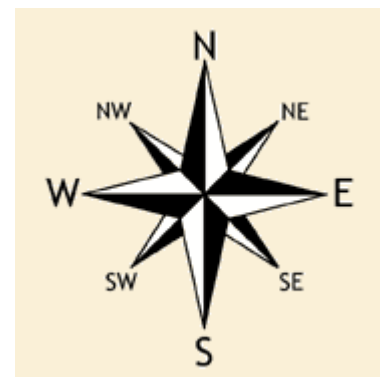
"We don't need no stinking survey!"

Okay, so you have a contract on a piece of property; you know (or suspect) that it's been surveyed at some time in the past and you want to find the corner monuments. You head out with your County GIS map and perhaps a legal description and proceed to walk the property looking for corner pins. You find iron pipes at all the corners; they look pretty old so you feel good that you have located the boundary markers and in the process, saved your client the cost of a new survey. You show your client what you found, he/she approves and the sale is made.

Ignorance is bliss . . . it can also cost you a lot of money!

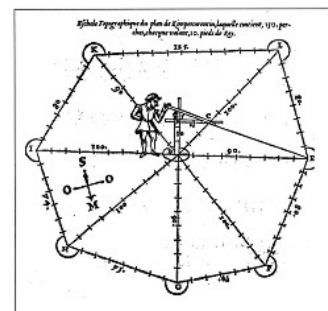
What you weren't aware of when you accepted the pipes as the property corners is that, when the *adjoining* property was originally surveyed, a monument could not be set at one corner because a fence post occupied that position, so the surveyor set an "offset" monument one foot away. The original owner knew about this, but has long since passed away. The property has changed hands several times since then. The fence and fence corner that had been there during the first survey were removed by the person who bought the property from the original owner. So what you *assumed* was a property corner, and showed the buyer, was actually an offset monument lying one foot onto the neighbor's property.

I had the unfortunate task of pointing this out to a landowner. He wanted to "shoot the messenger." He opted to go after his realtor instead. Be aware!



On a lighter (or perhaps, morbid) note

Not every survey job is a nightmare or troublesome. Some are quite interesting. A few years ago, we got a call from the Clarkdale police department. It seems that some human remains were discovered scattered along an arroyo just outside of town. We were hired to measure the precise locations of the bodyparts – a hand here, a foot there, in order to make a map that the detectives could use in their investigation. The project was titled, "Bodyparts Survey." As it turned out, there wasn't a chainsaw killer on the loose, but rather, it was death by natural causes. Coyotes had carried off the bodyparts.



Patrick Naville, RLS

Did you know?

A cough releases an explosive charge of air that moves at speeds up to 60 mph.

A sneeze can exceed the speed of 100 mph.

The sound of a snore (up to 69 decibels) can be almost as loud as the noise of a pneumatic drill.

"A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort."

Herm Albright

