

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
2023
Al Jeraj, O.L.S.

The Executive Director is the senior staff officer of the Association, responsible to the President and Council of the Association. In addition to formal roles as Secretary to Council and Treasurer of the Association, the Executive Director implements decisions of Council, promotes the welfare and image of the Association, promotes liaison between all segments of the Association and other organizations, government bodies and the public, and ensures the efficient day-to-day operation of the Association office.

This report will cover the period from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023 under the general headings of Staff, Administration, Strategic Planning, Membership, Government Relations, and Public Relations.

Staff

The Association's staff complement for 2023 included a total of 12 staff members (including four Ontario Land Surveyors). In addition, we had six Ontario Land Surveyor consultants to assist the Survey Review Department (SRD) with the Peer Review Program.

During 2023, we reviewed the organizational structure of the office and identified changes that were implemented in 2024. We were also notified by Maureen Mountjoy of her intention to retire at the end of the year. We congratulate Maureen on her decision to retire and wish her well as she starts the next chapter in her life.

The complete staff list at the end of 2023 is as follows:

<i>Al Jeraj, O.L.S.</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>
<i>Penny Connors</i>	<i>Registrar</i>
<i>Maureen Mountjoy, O.L.S.</i>	<i>Deputy Registrar (retired)</i>
<i>Lena Kassabian</i>	<i>Office Manager</i>
<i>Penny Anderson</i>	<i>Member Services Coordinator and Webmaster</i>
<i>Joyce Tenefrancia</i>	<i>Public Relations and Registration Officer</i>
<i>Cynthia Gibson</i>	<i>Bookkeeper / Accountant / Controller</i>
<i>Paul Wyman, O.L.S.</i>	<i>Survey Review – Manager</i>
<i>Al Worobec, O.L.S.</i>	<i>Survey Review – Field Survey Examiner</i>
<i>Sheila Lavina</i>	<i>Survey Review – Administration Officer</i>
<i>Herman Bernardo</i>	<i>Survey Review – Survey Review Department Examiner Assistant</i>
<i>David Whitton</i>	<i>Communications Specialist (till August, 2023)</i>
<i>Michelle Petosa</i>	<i>Administrative Coordinator (hired September, 2023)</i>

The following provides a brief background of staff members.

In January 2023, **Al Jeraj** assumed the role of Executive Director at the AOLS, bringing with him nearly two decades of experience. During his 18-year tenure as the City Surveyor for the City of Mississauga, Al managed a team of nine professionals and oversaw all cadastral surveying projects essential to municipal operations, including preparing plans for land interest acquisition and disposal, topographic plans, and serving as a trusted advisor to Council and internal departments on survey-related matters. Additionally, Al managed several GIS projects, including the creation of winter and fall maintenance routes, MiWay asset data, MiWay service interruption maps, and other custom mapping projects. He led the first Mobile LiDAR asset management project in Ontario to collect data on municipal assets within the City's right-of-ways. Before joining the City, Al served as a project manager at J.D. Barnes overseeing a variety of projects. Al is a Past President of the Association and obtained his licence in 2002.

Penny Connors joined the AOLS as **Registrar** in June 2022. Penny brings a wealth of regulatory and policy experience. She also brings many other skills and knowledge to the Association, including leadership, project

management, governance, and financial management. Penny has held Executive Director, Director and Manager positions with other not-for-profit and government organizations, including the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologist (OACETT), the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO), the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada (IBAC), the Technical Standards & Safety Authority (TSSA), and the Ministry of Health. She has certification in many areas but, to name a few, she is a Certified Association Executive (CAE) through the Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE) and holds certificates in Human Resources Management (CHRM) from the HR Professional Association of Ontario (HRPAO) and in Risk Management (CRM) from the University of Toronto/RIMS.

Her principal duties include supporting the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee, the Complaints Committee, and the Registration Committee by preparing their agendas and minutes and ensuring that all correspondence emanating from these committees is processed expeditiously. She responds to numerous inquiries from both members and the public. She also attends Council meetings, represents the AOLS as a member of the CBEPS Board, and acts as liaison to the Office of the Fairness Commissioner. The Registrar holds the responsibility for most registration activities under the *Surveyors Act*.

Maureen Mountjoy is a graduate of the first class ('76) of the Survey Science program at Erindale College, University of Toronto. In 1978, she was the second woman to become an Ontario Land Surveyor. She has been the **AOLS Deputy Registrar** and Editor of the *Ontario Professional Surveyor* magazine since the fall of 2000 and announced her retirement for December 31, 2023. This last year she turned over responsibility as editor of our magazine to Dave Whitton as part of a succession plan.

She is also the Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer of the AOLS Educational Foundation and works closely with the colleges and universities whose students benefit from the awards generated from the Foundation. Maureen is a non-voting member of the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee (AERC), a member of the Public Awareness Committee (recently folded into the Marketing and Recruitment Committee (MRC)), the Geomatics Recruitment and Liaison Committee (recently folded into MRC), the University and College Liaison Committee (recently folded into MRC), the MRC and the Underground Utilities Committee (UUC). She is also a member of the Best Practices Committee of the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance (ORCGA). She attends many trade shows and career fairs to promote our profession and works closely with faculty and students in the Geomatics program at York University. She is the AOLS representative on the York University Geomatics Engineering/Geomatics Science Advisory Committee. Her tireless work promoting our profession should continue to pay dividends in the form of new members.

Lena Kassabian has been with the AOLS since August 2005. As **Office Manager**, she ensures the AOLS office is running smoothly, and that staff and members' expectations are met in a timely manner.

Lena is deeply involved with the AERC. She is responsible for processing evaluations and articling applications for students seeking their designation as an Ontario Land Surveyor. She meets with prospective candidates and engages them in the process in a positive fashion and ensures that all applicants receive the necessary materials. She takes great joy in helping local and internationally trained candidates achieve their goals.

Lena also scouts out locations for annual general meetings, Council meetings, AERC events, the Geomatics picnic and other meetings and seminars. She negotiates contracts for these events and organizes them. Along with all of the above, Lena is the key organizer of the Association's annual general meeting.

Lena is transitioning her non-statutory duties to Michelle Petosa and will be reporting directly to the Registrar in her new role as the **AERC Support Coordinator**.

David Whitton joined the AOLS in January 2022 as **Communications Specialist**. He has a Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, an honours Bachelor of Arts in English and Philosophy and a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Journalism. He has experience in writing, editing, book production, and producing annual reports and bulletins for technical and regulatory organizations. He has also authored two books and brings social media skills.

His responsibilities included addressing our social media presence, editing our website, producing our *In Sight* newsletters, and editing the *Ontario Professional Surveyor* magazine. He took the Council and Executive Committee minutes and was involved in other committees including the Inclusivity and Diversity Committee.

David and AOLS parted ways in August. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

Penny Anderson has been with the AOLS since June 2012 as **Member Services Coordinator**. She is certified in Web Design and Development from Sheridan College and obtained her Information Systems Management Certification at Ryerson University. She has her PMP Certification through Sheridan College.

Her role involves managing the membership database, scheduling membership dues, and updating website content (this is transitioning to David). Penny is the channel for members' information changes, REACH bulletin distributions, and assistance to members on how to navigate the website and set up membership accounts online. She also took on the role of dealing with Continuing Education this year.

Penny also provides support to the Executive Director in generating demographic reports and acts as our technology expert within the office. She assists all staff with their computing needs and problems.

Joyce Tenefrancia is the **Public Relations and Registration Officer**. She joined the AOLS in June 2016. Joyce is your first point of contact with the Association. She is the AOLS receptionist, answering the telephone, responding to emails, opening the mail, and generally meeting and greeting those who come into the office. She maintains the Learning Management System and a public inquiries dataset. This last year she has generated many statistical reports related to articling.

She supports almost all the AOLS staff, and various committees, specifically the AERC and Complaints Committee. Daily, she acts as service conduit for a variety of stakeholders. The AOLS membership and extended community is important to her. If you don't know which staff member you should be contacting, ask Joyce and she will send you in the right direction! She continues to be the one constant in the office as we have migrated to a hybrid environment.

Joyce is transitioning her non-statutory roles to Michelle Petosa and will be reporting directly to the Registrar in her new role as **Statutory Support Coordinator**.

Cynthia Gibson joined the AOLS in April 2018 as our **Bookkeeper/Accountant/Controller**. She is responsible for our financial wellbeing, for all processes of recording accounting information, analyzing its components, and producing monthly financial statements for management and dealing with all payments and invoices for the Association. All these steps are vital for us to ensure our integrity, to know our current financial performance, and to forecast future activities to ensure they are financially feasible.

Cynthia also does all year-end procedures including preparation of various tables, schedules and reports that auditors need to prepare for annual financial statements.

Liability insurance, although handled by the insurance broker, is incorporated into our accounting system. We are also involved in the whole process as we receive premiums paid by members prior to paying the portion to the insurance broker.

Other current operations handled by Cynthia include payroll, reconciliations with banks and government bodies, and preparation of annual reports for Revenue Canada. Cynthia is working toward becoming a Certified Professional Accountant.

Cynthia has also taken on the additional responsibility of bookkeeper for the Educational Foundation.

Paul Wyman joined the Association as **Manager** of the **Survey Review Department (SRD)** in September 2021. Paul brings a wealth of experience, having operated several firms providing a variety of surveying services, and as a part owner of three leading-edge alternative service providers. He has taught geomatics, and also worked for the federal government contracting and overseeing surveying services. He was a consultant performing reviews for the Survey Review Department in the past. Lastly, he understands the operations of the AOLS, having been a past president. His enthusiasm for learning and passing on knowledge to others makes him an ideal candidate as Manager of the SRD.

Paul, the SRD staff, and the consultants at the Survey Review Department are constantly trying to improve the operation of the department. It is worth reminding members that every comprehensive review undergoes a review by a second consultant to attempt to remove any bias.

Paul has also been active on the Continuing Education Committee and on the Professional Standards Committee, which are great fits with his AOLS position. He has updated the Interpretive Guide for Ontario Regulation 216/10 and consolidated and updated the field notes guides. He provided a webinar on field notes and continues to be willing to assist surveyors.

Al Worobec joined the Association as **Field Survey Examiner** of the **Survey Review Department (SRD)** in early January 2014. Al is a graduate of the Survey Science program at Erindale College, University of Toronto (U of T). Al brings a wealth of experience from his many years in private practice and from his involvement in Association activities, most recently as the 2009 President. Al works on a part-time basis completing field reviews.

Sheila Lavina has been with the AOLS since March 2010 and has worked as the Administration Officer. In September 2014, she transferred to the role of **SRD Administrative Officer**. Sheila acts as a liaison between the SRD and the participating firms. Other duties consist of ordering and maintaining supplies, coordinating meetings, and assisting in planning day-to-day operations. Sheila's main responsibility is to make sure activities between the firms and SRD are organized and completed within the time allotted. She has been instrumental in maintaining statistics and developing historical reports.

She is dedicated to serving our AOLS members as well as members of the public. Part of her dedication is in ensuring that all meetings of Council and committees are scheduled, and reminders are sent out prior to each meeting. This has really helped to ensure attendance at our meetings.

Herman Bernardo has been with the AOLS since November 2010 as **Survey Review Department Examiner Assistant**. His responsibilities include preparing comprehensive review files that are complete and ready for field examination and to be sent to reviewers.

Herman assists the Field Survey Examiner with field examinations, so he is often out of the office, working in the fresh air all over Ontario. He also fulfills the logistical needs for field operations.

He is our go-to person whenever something needs to be assembled, disassembled, moved, or fixed in the office.

Michelle Petosa joined AOLS in September 2023 as the **Office Administrative Coordinator**. Michelle's responsibilities include acting as the initial point of contact for the public and AOLS members, assisting to maintain the member database and generate reports, support AERC processes, attend and organize the Annual General Meeting, oversee the general operation of the office. In addition, Michelle has assumed the role of Secretary for the Educational Foundation.

Overall Staff

Staff continue to work in a hybrid environment, which is further described below. Whether staff are working from home or in the office, they continue to take their role seriously to protect the public and meet the regulatory needs of our members. I look forward to working with each of them in the years to come.

Administration

AOLS staff work in a hybrid environment and are required to come in the office on Monday and one other day of their choosing in the week. We have relaxed our mask wearing policy but require those who may not feel to wear a mask when at the office or to call in sick if depending on the severity and nature of their illness.

A new Employee Handbook was created to reflect current HR requirements under the Human Rights Code and the Employment Standards Act. In addition, job descriptions for each staff member were rewritten to better reflect the responsibilities of each position.

Considerable effort was invested by our team in formulating the architecture for our membership database. Upon recognizing the substantial time required for development and implementation, a strategic decision was made to collaborate with Thentia Cloud. Their off-the-shelf modules are poised to comprehensively address our operational requirements, with an anticipated launch scheduled for Q4, 2024. The impending deployment of this new database is expected to optimize operational efficiencies through the automation of diverse processes and elevate the quality of our reporting mechanisms.

Furthermore, in pursuit of continuous improvement, Captus Press has been selected as our designated exam provider. Their platform is poised to streamline operational processes by automating various existing procedures, providing enhanced insights into the efficacy of our exam questions. We are targeting a deployment timeframe aligned with the November exam session, aiming to expedite the exam marking process and enhance our capacity to promptly report students' marks.

A massive review of all paper documents at the office was completed. In accordance with our Record Retention policy, AOLS was able to discard a significant amount of paper. The remaining documents are slated to be scanned and indexed later with the intention of moving AOLS to a fully digital organization.

Three by-laws were approved by Council. They were:

1. By-Law 2023-01 – Regarding the use of SRD Stickers
2. By-Law 2023-02 – Regarding Fees Payable to the AOLS
3. By-Law 2023-03 – Regarding the Late Fee Penalty

Work continued identifying potential changes to the *Surveyors Act*. Most notably, Council considered policies on the following:

- Requirements to grant a Certificate of Authorization
- Modernizing Office Operations
- Granting Limited and Temporary Licences
- Enhancing the power of the Complaints Committee
- Control over Bylaws and Regulations
- Control over Practice Standards
- Raising the minimum amount of liability insurance to \$2M

A presentation of all the proposed changes to the Act and Regulations will be made to the membership during the Annual General Meeting.

In addition, several Task Forces were struck to address the changes to the registration process and exams. These include the Core Competency Working Group for Cadastral, the Core Competency Working Group for Certificate of Registrations, the Core Competency Assignment Group, the Limited Licence Task Force, the Statutes Exam Working Group, the Professional Written, AIT and Plan Check working group, the Oral Exam Working Group, and the Competency Based Assessment Task Force.

Based on the work completed by many of the above noted groups, AOLS submitted to the Office of the Fairness Commissioner, in advance of the December 2nd, deadline, our new Competency Based Assessment process to satisfy the requirements of FARPACTA (Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act). While the articling process remains in place for those who choose it, we are confident that the new process will provide a fair and equitable option to those seeking licensure who have the necessary qualifications to become licensed.

Strategic Planning/Directions

Work continued the Strategic Plan that was tweaked in 2022. In the Key Priorities and Action Plan, the following targets were met:

- articling surveyor handbook was developed.
- the EAK (renamed Core Competencies) were updated.
- the Core Competency supporting material on the Learning Management System are updated and complete for each Competency category.
- the experience requirement as required by FARPACTA is complete (i.e. the CBA process).
- the content for the Statutes Exam has been developed and the format for the exam will change to a multiple-choice format.
- the content for the written professional, oral, AIT and Plan check exams are being updated and will be ready for the Fall 2024 exam session.

Concerns remain about our demographics and if a significant percentage of members retire, there will be a significant drop in revenue which may put a strain on existing services. Last year, we engaged 4th year students at Humber College to develop a marketing strategy which they completed. We went to market with their plan and reviewed three proposals from professional marketing firms and chose Halmyre as the successful candidate. Halmyre is a purpose-built marketing company that has worked for regulatory and non-profit organizations to develop growth-oriented strategies and build engagement with stakeholders. Their targeted marketing approach will aid us in recruiting new members to the profession and will raise the profile of our profession with government and industry partners.

As noted above, we have continued to make progress on defining the future needs of a new *Surveyors Act*. Most of the elements have been decided, and regular meetings with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry are underway with the aim of completing all changes to the *Act* and *Regulations* in a Fall Bill, 2024.

Membership

Housing remains a top priority of government and the meeting the impending housing demand is concerning given our current demographics. The aging demographic, with members over 60 representing the largest cohort, signals an impending retirement wave. This not only impacts the workforce but also raises concerns about a potential decline in revenue. The decline in Certificates of Authorization further compounds these challenges, emphasizing the need for strategic planning to ensure a sustainable financial future.

Several improvements were made to the PSRI including:

- Initial implementation of Island as a record type
- Creation of the Invalid Record Parking Lot to review and repair invalid records
- Deployment of code to prevent invalid records received from the affiliated providers (LSR and Pimark) from overwriting valid records in PSRI
- Implementation of GeoLookUp function to facilitate entry of Historic Municipal names to generate current LRO/Municipal/Township entry
- Automatic population of PIN(s) and Roll Number(s) when entering a single record into Survey Manager

We continue to review and make improvements to the database based on user feedback. The database contains over 3 million records and is searched approximately 2,500 times each month.

The reliance on committee work is a key resource for AOLS, highlighting the active involvement of practitioners and the commitment of volunteers. The addition of new groups, mentioned in the Administration section of this report, demonstrates an ongoing effort to adapt and address industry needs.

The in-person AGM in Niagara after two years of online meetings was a positive development, fostering a sense of community and connection among members. While there is consideration for a hybrid AGM in the future, the emphasis on the strength of in-person events reflects the importance of personal interaction within the association.

The provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities through webinars, the Geodetic Picnic, and Regional Group meetings shows a commitment to supporting members in their professional growth and accounted for over 35 hours of CPD credits. Tom Packowski's contribution with a 6-part offering on Office Procedures and Checklists is acknowledged, providing valuable information to the members.

Throughout my tenure on the Council and in my current role as Executive Director, I consistently observe and appreciate the dedication displayed by our members to their profession through their active participation in Committees and Task Forces. The backbone of the Association lies in the commitment of its members, and without this dedication, meeting our regulatory obligations would pose significant challenges.

Public Relations

The Marketing and Recruitment Committee continues to make presentations at numerous events to promote the profession. They meet on a regular basis to review their annual tactical plan. In addition, the Committee was involved in the selection of the marketing firm Halmyre and a subset of the Committee has been tasked with working with Halmyre and to oversee the marketing project.

In 2023, only three editions of the Ontario Professional Magazine were released, with one of them being delayed. It became evident that producing a magazine exceeded our available staffing resources. In light of this realization, Council deliberated on the matter, considering our strategic objective to separate regulatory responsibilities from member service duties. Consequently, the decision was made to discontinue the publication of the magazine. In response to this change, *In Sight* will now serve as the primary platform through which members can access information. With a bi-weekly publishing schedule, *In Sight* ensures members receive timely and pertinent updates, including "News from 1043," notifications of Regional Group meetings, event details, and links to relevant articles. This transition guarantees that members can rely on a more frequent and current source of information. Special thanks goes out to Penny Anderson for ensuring *In Sight* was published regularly.

Executive Directors' Meetings

We continue to be active on the national front in seeking solutions to strengthen our profession across the Country. Executive Directors/Chief Executive Officers met quarterly and shared information and solutions. This year, Alberta hosted an in-person meeting of the group to share information and seek solutions. Although slow on moving forward with specific initiatives, we agree that where we can consolidate resources, we should. Of note, is the common desire to move CPD requirements for each Province to a national body.

Summary

We continue to be highly active and progressive as a small association. This report is a subset of all the work of staff at the AOLS and I want to thank them again for their dedication to help improve the Association and serve the public.

I would like to thank President Dave Kovacs and all of Council for their help and support over the past year. I would also like to thank past Executive Director Brian Maloney for his continued support and guidance.

It is an honour to serve as your Executive Director.

Al Jeraj, O.L.S.
Executive Director
Association of Ontario Land Surveyors