

## CALLING NAMES?

I enjoyed reading the June 2002 *Notes from the Editor* column. One comment however—you mentioned “knocking on the janitor’s door...” One must be careful not to call a “Building Engineer” a “janitor.” We must remember the overwhelming success engineers have had in allowing everyone who wants to use the title of “engineer” to do so. Too bad we can’t all call ourselves attorneys just as easily.

**Bob Valdes**  
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via email

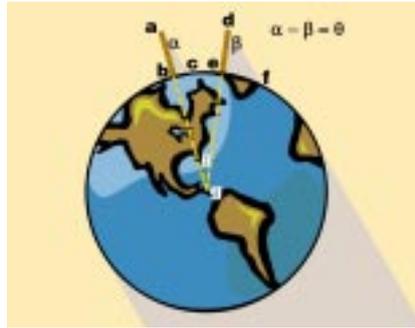
## ENGINEERING RECRUITS

I found your *Notes from the Editor* column in June to be intriguing. The story struck a memory with me.

Back in 1941 while attending engineering school at CCNY, I was awarded a prize for the Goodwin Memorial Surveying Competition. Along with the *Civil Engineering Handbook*, there was a coveted opportunity to work as an assistant instructor teaching surveying to

mechanical and electrical engineering students. The job was prestigious and paid an exciting wage compared to the other work I was doing.

Well, for the exam, the students had to use a transit to determine the height of one of the steeples on campus. I selected a location different from the



prior year’s exam. There were a number of wrong answers based on the prior year’s exam. The professor and I talked it over and I offered to re-grade any student who would show me that he could take a transit and get a decent result. In fact I devoted one Saturday

(unpaid) to this effort. I pointed out to the students that knowing how to use a transit was a valuable skill well worth acquiring.

I explained that you could determine latitude by measuring the angle of the sun at noon. In fact, I showed how you could measure the length of a shadow and the angle of the sun to get very close to the actual height.

Since then, I’ve been trying hard to recruit engineers among my 16 grandchildren. My pitch is you can’t be a real world leader unless you excel in science and engineering. One success so far out of five graduates—an M.E. from Stanford.

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*Modern Steel Construction* welcomes reader feedback. Contact either Scott Melnick (melnick@modernsteel.com) or Keith Grubb (grubb@modernsteel.com) with your comments or concerns.