

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Book now for the
ISA CONFERENCE 13th MAY 2009

Following the success of the last two conferences held at Silverstone Race Circuit, which proves to be a most popular venue, arrangements have been made for returning to Silverstone this year for a third time.

The cost for the day's 7 ½ hours LLL (CPD) has been held at £95 plus VAT and includes a sit-down buffet lunch.

Don't forget to book early for **Wednesday 13th May** – your invitation and programmes have been sent. Why not bring a non-member colleague?

Contact Sue Thatcher on **01625 500808**
or conferences@surveyorsweb.co.uk

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITIES in Surveyors' Offices



*“You think safety is expensive
– try having an accident!”*

Sir Stelios Hajiloannou
(Easyjet PLC)

Are you all sitting comfortably?

16 years have passed since enactment of *The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (SI 2792)* but, as an increasing number of surveyors (and other professionals) choose to work from an office at home - either employing secretarial staff directly, or on a part-time basis where each employee is engaged as a ‘home-worker’ in their own premises, there is a need to take care that the Regulations are not breached.

Musculo-skeletal disorders in the upper body are becoming commonplace in office workers as a result of poor ergonomic work-station design. Complaints about the neck, wrists and shoulders are a particular issue.

A press release of a study by *ViewSonic Europe* in 2007 claims that 77% of workers suffer eye-fatigue; 71% suffer backaches; 67% suffer headaches, and pressure of work discourages 31% of workers from taking ‘ergo-breaks’; 47% of employees haven’t been ‘ergo-advised’ on correct posture. More alarmingly, two-thirds of employees “*would consider suing their employer over health issues*”.

Anyone who employs staff using a keyboard or sitting at a desk is advised to undertake a review of the ergonomics of work stations where work is carried out for their practices - not just in the office directly, but also for those employees who carry out work for the practice from their own homes on a regular basis. Use of a laptop with integral keyboard is not advised for anything but work of short duration.

Some aspects of the Regulations are worth remembering when considering the welfare of employees.

- a. The absolute duty of an employer to ensure that, where work is carried out for his undertaking, an analysis of all work stations is undertaken (regardless of who has provided them), to assess health and safety risks.
- b. Every employer is responsible for ensuring that display screen users take regular breaks, to reduce work-load.

- c. An employer is responsible if requested, for providing (and meeting the cost of) an appropriate **eye and eyesight test for display-screen users** and regularly thereafter. And for providing **appropriate corrective appliances** (i.e. spectacles) if required specifically for the work.
- d. Use of a work station must not be a source of risk for a user and, in particular, the following apply:
 - **stable images** for display screens (i.e. no flickering);
 - **adjustable brightness and contrast** between the characters on the screen and the background; i.e. free of reflective glare and reflection;
 - screen which can be **adjusted** for the needs of the user (i.e. swivels and tilts easily);
 - keyboard which is **tiltable and separate** from the screen; matt surface to reduce glare;
 - **work surface of sufficient** size to accommodate screen, keyboard, documents etc, and
 - **sufficient space** to support hands and arms;
 - **work chair: stable** with **adjustable seat** (height) and **back** to provide lumbar support and **adjustable** (i.e. in height and tilt); **footrest** to be made available if requested;
 - environment to be **adequately lit**, and with sufficient space for the user to change position and to **avoid direct glare** from windows or task lights;
 - provision of **training in software programmes**.

When interviewing staff for employment it is sensible to ask basic questions about general health, to ensure that the work offered does not aggravate any existing conditions such as arthritis, RSI or other musculo-skeletal problems.

Employers also have particular responsibility under Regulation 16-18 of the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999* to employees who are either pregnant or who have recently given birth, and careful (and sympathetic) enquiry should be made at the time of interview to determine whether special consideration needs to be given - particularly for women who may be taken on to carry out work for the practice from their own home.

As a final consideration, it is worth remembering that it is a legal requirement* for an 'employer' to notify the *Health and Safety Executive (HSE)* immediately if an employee suffers certain specific occupational diseases if diagnosed by a medical practitioner, including **cramp of the hand and forearm** (e.g. Repetitive Strain Injury - RSI); **bursitis** (e.g. 'students elbow'); **carpal tunnel syndrome** and **traumatic inflammation of the tendons of the hand and forearm** ('tendonitis').

* *Reporting of Injuries (Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)*

FLOODING - Global warming - or inappropriate development on a flood plain?



FLOODSKIRT

Many members will recall the 'Floodskirt' invention that was originally launched at our 2001 Conference by our member, Glyn Woodward, and his colleague, Terry Blake. Although the product did not turn out to be a great commercial success, the two installations that have been installed to properties in Northallerton in Yorkshire and Yalding in Kent are both still serving their owners proud eight years down the line.

The Yalding system successfully held back about a metre of water for over 30 hours in 2002 and has been deployed by the current owner six times during recent floods from the adjoining river - saving the property from disaster. The property has been sold – essentially only due to the fact that the flood defence system had been installed. Glyn and Terry have, with expertise, painstakingly developed the system over nine years and recently received an exuberant telephone call from one of their clients, who lives on an island on the River Thames, that her system had successfully saved her property from floods on a number of occasions.

Floodskirt is now a subsidiary of TC Blake Building Contractors Tel: 01732 866735 and Glyn and Terry will be pleased to provide flood defence advice to any affected property owners. Pictured is the Yalding property during the 2002 floods.

Internet WARNING:

Council member Owen Grainger explains the difference between http and https

I thought it important enough to circulate the following, even if you are already aware.

FIRST, many internet users are unaware of the difference between http:// and https:// – “It’s all about keeping you secure”.

http means *Hyper Text Transport Protocol* - in a manner of speaking - a “language” for passing information back and forth between web servers and clients. The important difference between http and https is the letter ‘S’

No surprise that the ‘S’ stands for ‘secure’. Look at most websites or webpages, and look at the address in the web browser will likely begin with **http://**

Essentially, it means that the website is talking to your browser using regular ‘insecure’ language and it is possible for an intruder to ‘eavesdrop’ on your communication with the website, i.e. fill out a form on the website, and an unwelcome third party might be able to access the information you send to that site.

For this reason you should never enter your credit card number in an **http://** website! On the other hand, if the web address begins with **https://** your computer is talking to the website in a secure code that no-one can eavesdrop on.

If a website asks you to enter credit card information, you should confirm that the web address begins with **https://** before giving details.

If it doesn’t, there’s no way you’re going to enter sensitive information like a credit card number – or is there? Take care to protect confidential information.

ISA WEBSITE

Our Webmaster, Roger Wilkey, has carried out a total overhaul and upgrade of the ISA website, which should be a useful tool for running a busy surveyors’ practice, particularly with the links it provides. Several members are setting up the ISA ‘Home’ page as their own computer Home page and realising the benefit of the easy reference system.

Your suggestions/comments are welcome at mail@surveyorsweb.co.uk

SURVEY TALK

1. Shower Enclosures:

Be aware of faulty or leaking shower enclosures where either ceramic tiling has failed from use of incorrect or insufficient adhesive, or where the backing board itself is not of approved water-resisting type - inexperienced contractors will use standard paper-faced gypsum plasterboard rather than boards approved under the BBA Certification scheme (such as 'Hardbacker 250' and '500', 'Wedi Tilebacker' and similar products).

Insidious leakage from shower and bath enclosures can be extremely difficult to detect during a survey unless it is at an advanced stage where patent leakage is apparent. Remedial work can be extremely costly, particularly if the shower tray or bath rests on a chipboard floor which has also suffered deterioration.

ISA recommends members undertaking surveys to include a 'risk phrase' or 'limitation' about showers/tiling; also to take care to examine shower enclosures carefully for evidence of loss-of-key (and hollowness) in the lower tiles; deterioration of sealant and settlement in the tray base. Furthermore, always test the shower for operation and confirm that there is no leakage from the valves or body of the shower unit. Two minutes in a check of this type can save a stressful few hours if a client complains later!

2. Single-lap Concrete Tiles on Low-pitch Roofs:

ISA members are reporting defects in relatively modern roofs (i.e. less than 30 years old) where the side interlocks between tiles become impeded by 'Fines' derived from the surface of the tiles combined with organic matter from moss - resulting in blockage and surface water spillage into the roof void, particularly on low-pitch roofs.

Moss can also invade the interlocks and cause the joints to lift apart and let in water.

If leakage occurs, the manufacturers will claim that the tile is not at fault but that the house owner is responsible for ensuring that the surface of the roof and the interlocks in particular are maintained in clean condition, and that any defects (holes, tears, and deterioration) in the underlining membrane are made good. Members are advised to take particular care when inspecting roofs of this type and to look out for evidence of settlement of eaves tiles as well as water penetration and dampness in the roof void - particularly along the eaves and wall-plate.



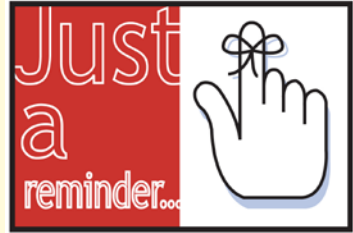
ECONOMIES IN A SURVEY OFFICE

No-one can doubt the recession is biting hard. Many Estate Agents will be lucky to break even in 2009, let alone make a profit. Survey practices without alternative income streams are having to make savings and retract, others are seeking niche markets, or closing down.

Particular problems are facing small practices.

Large firms and the corporates, whose staff numbers hundreds, or thousands, will shed staff, in

order to retain their core business. Small practices, such as ours, do not usually enjoy that luxury. The last thing you want is to close, because re-establishing a practice, in better times, is far more risky than simply 'treading water' whilst awaiting future market improvements. Here are a few ideas that might help to remain afloat:



Staff: We are a labour-intensive industry; our biggest expense is staff. Try not to shed key staff, particularly those who have been with you for a long time, as you will be relying upon them when we move out of recession/depression.

The priority is to be honest with your employees; take them into your confidence and explain the predicament. Many will not wish to be made redundant, as finding alternative, let alone as congenial, employment is going to be very difficult, if not impossible. Why not offer the alternative of a temporary reduction in salary. A 20% across-the-board salary drop is equivalent to making one in five redundant! Note: this procedure needs to be handled sensitively and only after consultation with your lawyers on "employment rights" issues!

Premises: If you rent premises, talk to your landlord, before finances get out of hand. Few landlords will want empty premises at this time and may well be willing to negotiate either a temporary reduction in rent, or a deferment of part of the rent, hopefully without the accrual of interest, until business picks up sufficiently. Utilities: Shop around for cheaper gas and electricity. There is a myriad of suppliers out there. The general opinion, at the moment, is not to opt for fixed rates, as gas and electricity costs may be coming down.

Stationery: This is one of the biggest rips-off in the business world. It is not simply a matter of shopping around, but of hard bargaining. Viking is not necessarily the cheapest, even for so-called discounted goods on the front page of their flyers. Hard bargaining with various suppliers, including companies such as Lyraco, can secure discounts of 60%/75% off their "list" prices! For example, decent quality 90gsm. DL envelopes can be bought for £7.50 per 1,000 (yes, 1,000, not 500!).

Toner and Ink Cartridges: Re-manufactured cartridges for laser and inkjet printers can be bought for a fraction of the OEM (eg. HP) price, but only buy from a recognised source, so that if anything does go wrong, then you will have a ‘comeback’. Most reputable firms will replace defective laser cartridges, even if they are part-used.

Bill Payments:

- (a) Pay small firms promptly. They will be in the same boat as you; “do as you would be done by”.
- (b) Delay paying large companies until the end of the credit limit and even then try to pay by credit card. It is surprising how many stationers, directories (advertising), etc., will accept credit cards, with out extra charge. That will buy you several more weeks credit. Even your subscription to the RICS does not need to be paid until the end of March and that, too, can be paid by *Visa* or *Master Card*.

Credit Cards. Consider switching to a credit card that offers a cash-back. *American Express* offer a graduated scheme from ½% to 1½%, whilst *Capital One* will pay you 1% of your total spend. There may be others.

Telephones Look for an alternative (to *BT*) provider. Some may offer bundles, which can even include your calls.

Particularly if you work from home, consider switching your fax line from “business” to “residential”. If you are in the right location, you might then be able to transfer it to *TalkTalk*, who offer a £21 monthly bundle, including line rental, broadband and all UK landline (01, 02 and 03) calls 24/7.

In addition, you would get free calls to the EU, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand! If you go for *TalkTalk*, try buying it through a branch of *Carphone Warehouse* and ask for a further incentive/cash-back.

Mobile Phones: Are you on a good tariff? If you have a number of mobiles, think of switching them all into one inclusive tariff. If you go through an agent, rather than direct or through a high street shop, you can often negotiate very substantial cash-backs. I do and, effectively, pay less than £35 per month for 10 lines, 1,000 shared minutes and free calls between our own 10 lines. If you have a spare line, leave one in the office, so that you can call in without charge. Of course, you can even include your family’s mobiles, to make up the numbers, but do not fiddle either the VAT or the Income Tax!

Business Rates: If your RV is below the relevant limit, have you signed up for small business relief? Check with your local (billing) authority.

Have a Party: Many firms and particularly the large ones, are cutting out their annual (staff) party and other entertainment. I am not. I have decided to throw a drinks party

for as many of my introducer contacts as possible. Not only does this show them that we are alive and raring to go, but that we care for each and every one of them. A few bottles of modestly-priced wine/beer, using glasses from off-licences, with small cold eats, may cost less than the fee that you earn from a single instruction!

Photocopiers: If you need a new one, or your present one is expensive and not on contract, there are thousands of fairly modern second-hand machines available to purchase. Look on e-bay, or buy from a dealer with a guarantee. Some local service companies will sell you a reconditioned machine with a maintenance contract, to include all the toner that you need. Good (18/23 pages per minute) black and white combined copiers/printers/scanners, etc., can be bought for well under £1,000. Even new “small business” machines are being heavily discounted by certain dealers, sometimes by as much as 60%.

Laser Printers: Do not buy a new one. Buy a good make, second-hand, usually for a song. An old workhorse, such as an HP LaserJet 4 Plus could cost you around £25. Remanufactured toner cartridges, generally giving more than 6,000 copies, can be bought for under £20.

Postage Stamps:

- (a) From time to time some of the larger stores and particularly supermarkets, sell postage stamps below face value. Keep your eyes open and pay with a credit card.
- (b) Consider using a franking machine. Although the cost of postage is less than using adhesive stamps, the machine rental can be quite high. However, when pushed, *Pitney Bowes* may offer to reduce their charge from £20, to about £6, per month. Also, *Pitney Bowes* is offering a free trial and even including a postage credit of between £20 and £50, for use during the trial period.

Newspapers and Professional Journals: Do not buy on a daily basis. Papers such as the *Times*, *Telegraph* and *F.T.*, as well as *Estates Gazette* and *Property Week* offer substantial discounts for subscriptions, typically 25%. Many can be delivered by your newsagent (who does not ‘lose out’), or can be “purchased” from any newsagent on a daily basis, using prepaid vouchers.

Owen Grainger 2009

[Note: This advice is intended to stimulate ideas on how to make savings as an aide memoire. ISA accepts no liability for the recommendations offered].

HOME INFORMATION PACKS

Members with estate agency practices will be aware of the recent petition to Government to extend the ‘concession’ of “First-Day Marketing”. The petition stated its request as follows:

1. **“As matters stand, the Government has legislated that it will be illegal after 31st December 2008 for a home owner (or their estate agent) to begin advertising, erect a For Sale board, prepare flyers – indeed undertake any form of marketing until a Home Information Pack (HIP) is prepared and returned to the seller or agent. Existing experience of HIP delivery times has already established that a 10 day delay in production is not unusual. Owners or agents can be fined £200 a day by Trading Standards Officers should they begin marketing before their HIP arrives. We call upon the government to continue to permit intending house sellers to be allowed to put their homes on the market on the day they choose to and not to have to wait for their HIP to be delivered first.”**
2. **“We, the undersigned, petition the Prime Minister to allow intending Home Sellers (and their estate agents) to be permitted to continue to put their homes on the market on the day they choose after 31/12/2008 without having to wait for a Home Information Pack to arrive.”**

Government has responded with the following key points:

- The ‘First Day marketing’ (FDM) concession has been extended for a final period to 5th April 2009 when it will expire.
- From that date onwards a basic HIP must be available before marketing of a property can begin.
- This change will make it easier for Trading Standards agencies to identify non-compliance and enforce HIP duties.
- Removal of the FDM concession will not have a negative effect on the housing market.
- Industry feedback reports that the ‘basic HIP’ is available on average within 3-5 days.
- Sellers will have a 28 day grace period to include documents which take longer to obtain – e.g. Local Authority Search.
- Research by *Europe Economics* (November 2007) concludes HIPs have had no impact on the number of transactions or prices.

Extremely competitive prices are being offered for Energy Performance Certificates (*Lettingprotection.com*, a trading name of *Computershare Ltd*, is advertising a special offer ... “*professional energy inspection by experienced surveyors“ for £75 including VAT ...”whatever the size or location of your property ...”*)

Members of ISA are reporting instances of Domestic Energy Assessors who currently charge £35 for domestic EPCs and are able to offer such a rate by not undertaking roof void inspection. Other reports are common where EPCs for both sale and rental premises are handled by the agency itself – no conflict of interest there surely?

Comments from Energy Assessors on www.energyassessorsforums.co.uk are worth noting as a point of interest for this ‘new profession’.

All this is declared by Margaret Beckett as acting in the public interest. What views do members have?



ISA Executive Team recently met with Stephen Gould, Director of RICS Professional Regulation and Consumer Protection, and with Teresa Graham, CBE, Chair of the RICS Regulatory Board, to discuss progress with the new regulatory regime, its impact on members and to suggest improvements where uncertainty has developed. ISA also discussed the *Surveyors Ombudsman Scheme* (SOS).

Stephen Gould reports:

New Regulation: the First Year

I was delighted to receive a request to update ISA members on the results of the first year of RICS' regulatory operation under new rules. We have a year's data to work with which enables us to separate fact from myth. First though, it is important to remember what we had in place before the change.

Until last year all members were personally responsible for the actions of their firms. The Rules were long and detailed. The client accounts rules were even longer and even more detailed, and we had a "letter of the law" culture that for many members felt like we were trying to catch them out. This has all gone – replaced by a regime based on principles, flexibility and helping members to comply, but without a reduction in public protection. So what actually happened?

Registration and Monitoring

First, we have registered over 9000 member firms and virtually all of these submitted annual returns on-line. Small firms – around 7000 of the total – worried that they would see an increase in bureaucracy, work and cost. In fact, this doesn't seem to have happened. There is no evidence that firms found the process time consuming or difficult. One firm submitted a correctly completed return to us 19 minutes after we had sent it

out. At the other end of the scale some businesses have no modern communications at all. How we contact these on a continuing basis is still a matter for discussion. There have been comments about unreasonable timescales and lots of extra questions, but the data doesn't support this. A month or more to fill in a form does not seem unreasonable. And 4 communications – by e-mail, letter and telephone, from RICS before we move down an administrative fine route is the rule. No firm has been fined for delay if they have tried to talk to us first and explain the problem but the Regulatory Board is clear that no professional self-regulator can ignore firms that ignore RICS. That said 100 fines from over 9000 communications is a good result and one that has been reviewed by an independent, non staff Scrutiny Panel that has looked at both the look and feel of our communication and the cases where we took action.

I know there are also concerns about requests for what might be considered as commercially sensitive information. But the whole point about our new approach is to target the risky and let the good get on with their businesses. Without the right data, we must assume that a risk exists even if it does not. In fact, we needed to ask less than 5% of firms for more information. And I can also assure you that data that comes to Regulation in confidence, stays with us in this way. We do not share it with anyone – even other departments of RICS.

Regulatory Services

Our most successful innovation is introduction of regulatory review visits – primarily focused on client money but occasionally on other matters too. We have closely monitored whether firms have made any savings elsewhere – their accountants no longer need to do the old checks – and whether they think our service is professional and valuable to them.

On costs, which are tiered depending on the size of firm, about the same number of firms have kept their accountants' report as have not. So only firms are benefiting financially and we need to understand better why some firms feel the need for 2 reports. As for the competence and professionalism of review visits, we use independent researchers to survey firms for us and we only see the aggregate totals: no firm is identified. After 800 visits we have very positive results of over 85% favourable in most cases and some going over 95%. Member firms like our new approach.

As for the outcome of the reviews, yes, we do find things that need changing. Before, a problem led to a referral to a conduct panel or worse. Now, unless something very serious is identified, we help members put it right and move on. And yes, it is astounding what members' accountants had not been telling them!

Investigations

Of course, things do go wrong and complaints are made which we must investigate. In the first year of the new regime we closed around 1400 complaints referring 77 to the

disciplinary process. We are, we believe, now only dealing with very serious matters at this level. As for the rest, we have a variety of ways to manage them, but the most important thing is that we have tried to get away from the old, process bound approach. We are happy to speak to, visit and interview members if they think that is useful. The important point is the right outcome, not the detailed process.

Disciplinary

This is the end of the line for a very small number of members. Particularly on compliance we have used a new process involving consent orders where the firm and RICS agree the way ahead in private rather than have a public hearing. We have agreed 26 consent orders in the first year they were available. And, of course, the option to have a hearing is always there from members who want to.

Governance

Independent selection of all members and a significant non member involvement in all our Policy and Disciplinary committees provides the public with confidence. And members too are well represented with large and small firms having a chance to have their say. Board discussions are confidential but outcomes are published on the RICS website.

Redress

One of the leading members of the residential faculty has described the Surveyor Ombudsman Service as one of our great little secrets. And it is, saving members a fortune in membership fees for other schemes that the government would require them to join if SOS wasn't there. For members who resolve cases early, it is free; not just for the consumer but also for member firms. In difficult times, RICS firms should look hard at how much they are paying for access to independent redress.

The Future

So, what do I think? Well, the system is not perfect and there are still some challenges around costs. Hard data shows that it is only a very small minority that have yet to adapt to the new regulatory world in which they find themselves which is good because looking at the current economic climate, I think it likely that there will be demands for more regulation. We plan to keep ahead of the game making Regulated by RICS the strapline to have in property and the one that government trusts because it works.

Stephen Gould
RICS

NEW MEMBERS

ISA is delighted to welcome the following new members

John Baldwin BSc MRICS MCIOB	JP Baldwin Associates Ltd	TORQUAY
Nigel Britten BSc FRICS	EKR Property Consultants Ltd	SUTTON COLDFIELD
Martin Brown FRICS	Loring Brown Limited	BRACKLEY
Jeffrey Cooper FRICS ACIARB MBAE	Cooper Kendall Partnership	LONDON
Mark Elliott MRICS DipHI	Elliott Consultants Ltd	NORTHWICH
Nigel Evans FRICS IRRV	Nigel Evans Surveyors & Valuers	BIRMINGHAM
Robert Hepburn BSc MRICS	Hepburn & Associates	TONBRIDGE
Winston Lawrence BSc MRICS	Lawrence Eden Associates Ltd	ENFIELD
Jonathan Mickleburgh BSc MRICS DipHI	Professional House Surveys	LEICESTER
Shaun Puntan MRICS	Lloyd Taylor Simpson Surveyors Ltd	CARDIFF
Richard Towler BA MRICS FAAV	Simpson Towler Chartered Surveyors	PENRITH
Peter Wyatt FRICS DEA	Wheldrake Properties Ltd	DONCASTER

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

David Hamilton, ISA's Director of Professional Standards, invites members' comments on the following:

In *Toth v Jarman* (2006) EWCA Civ 1028, the Courts expressed a view with regard to Conflicts of Interest and the appropriate declarations that Experts are expected to make.

The Judgement may also affect incentive or performance-linked fees. Members may wish to consider (and comment on) the ethics when a Panel firm, frequently run by a Chartered Surveyor, receives fees without full transparency of the transaction or where there is failure to give a declaration to the client on how the fee is allocated. That means for instance, if a full fee is taken from the Lender or a client instructing a survey, but a substantially reduced fee is paid to the surveyor who actually carries out the work, and where the client is unaware of how the payment is allocated between the surveyor and the intermediary. If such a practice is a Conflict of Interest then it might be viewed as unethical behaviour, which perhaps the RICS needs to consider. This is a complex subject but one which ISA may wish to take up with RICS if there is sufficient support from the membership in view of the increasing trend for intermediaries – often web-based – to offer services to the public and then commission the work from someone else.



Let us have your views - mail@surveyorsweb.co.uk

ISA COUNCIL MEMBERS at SILVERSTONE



David Hamilton

Director of Professional Standards

Owen Grainger

Executive Board Member

Trevor Thatcher

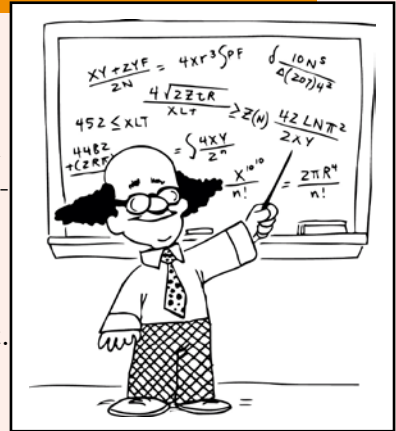
Director of Training & Conferences

AND FINALLY

Have you seen this man and his Implements of Math Destruction ?

At New York's Kennedy airport today an individual, later discovered to be a public school teacher, was arrested trying to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, a protractor, a square, a slide rule and a calculator.

The Attorney General believes the man is a member of the notorious Al-gebra movement. He is being charged with carrying weapons of math instruction.



“Al-gebra is a very fearsome cult, indeed”, the Attorney General said. “They desire average solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on a tangent in a search of absolute value. They consist of quite shadowy figures, with names like ‘x’ and ‘y’, and although they are frequently referred to as ‘unknowns’, we know they really belong to a common denominator and are part of the axis of medieval with co-ordinates in every country.

“As the great Greek philanderer Isosceles used to say, there are three sides to every triangle”. When asked to comment on the arrest, President Bush said “If God had wanted us to have better weapons of math instruction, He would have given us more fingers and toes”.

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On behalf of the ISA

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