

**PULLING CHAIN FOR G.P.O.
Guy Luther – District 1**

I transferred from Construction to Design in the early 1970's. This was before "flex time", and most everyone in the District office worked from 8-AM to 5-PM, with an hour for lunch. Several of the engineering staff, including myself, used their hour for a bag lunch and a game of pinochle. One of the others in the pinochle game was George Otterbeck, who I believe had recently returned to District 1 from the Division of Water Resources.

George was a Highway Engineering Technician II, and a licensed land surveyor. He had scouted out a surveying project, needed someone to "pull chain" on Saturdays, and asked if anyone was interested.

I was a Highway Engineering Technician I at the time, had a wife and two kids, and very little spending money. Of course, I was interested.

"Pulling chain" was a holdover term from when surveyors actually measured with a chain. But electronic distance measuring devices were several years off at that time, and we measured with a metal tape. And, in the rain forests of the greater Eureka area, we did more brush cutting than chaining.

It was my job to brush line, head chain, and set points. George operated the transit, took notes, rear chained, and sometimes helped me brush. I used to joke that George would help me if he thought I was brushing too slow, but he never thought I was brushing too slow if I was cutting through a Himalaya berry patch. George had a tool similar to a brush hook that was great for cutting through berry vines, until he broke it cutting an Alder tree.

I enjoyed working for George. He paid better than the State at the time (but, of course there was no retirement plan). And, I learned a lot about private land surveying. The main thing that I learned was that I wasn't cut out to be a licensed land surveyor. George was good at reconciling his work with the work (and often mistakes) of other surveyors. If I was signing those maps, I would have worried myself into an ulcer within six months.

I pulled chain for George on Saturdays for over ten years. He gave up private surveying after he was promoted to a Senior Transportation Engineer. Well, either that or he laid me off after he was promoted!

12/3/18