

“THE SCOPE”

Buffalo/Western New York Chapter – Chartered 1958
Incorporated 1966 Chapter Website: www.csibuffalo.org

Construction Specifications Institute, Inc. Website: www.csinet.org MARCH 10, 2011

DAY-HIGH-TECH-2011-AM-20

Lunch/Program Meeting

Date: Thursday – March 10, 2011
Time: 12:00pm – Registration
12:15pm – Lunch/Presentation
01:15pm – CSI Chapter Board Meeting
Topic: “Leveraging Your Specifications”
Sponsor: R.B. Woodcraft
Presenter: John Goot
Credit: 1 AIA HSW CES Credit
Location: Ramada Hotel & Conference Center
2402 North Forest Road, Amherst, NY

Please Indicate Choice of Lunch With RSVP:

1. Pulled Barbecue Pork Sandwich W/Side
2. Grilled Chicken BLT Wrap W/Side
3. Chicken Caesar Salad
4. Angus Burger W/Side
5. Grilled Portobella/Asiago Sandwich W/Side

Costs:

- No Charge for CSI Members
- \$5.00 Registration Fee for Guests

Objectives:

1. Quick overview of the Architectural Woodwork Quality Standards Illustrated.
2. Learn how to create a specification for architectural woodwork, using a guide Specification, properly referencing the new standards to embed the applicable sections of the new standards into their specification.
3. Understand and be able to utilize the power and details contained in the new Architectural Woodwork Standards with regards to specifications covering these sections.
4. Reduce the design and development timeline for woodwork elements, resulting in more billable hours in the office.

RSVP WITH DONNA ONLY OR HER VOICE MAIL AT 875-4627

GIVE YOUR NAME AND FIRM OR COMPANY

NO E-mail RESERVATIONS

RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY 4:00 PM MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2011

AFTER CLOSING DATE YOUR NAME WILL BE RECEIVED

BUT YOUR MENU WILL BE POT LUCK

(Cancellations no later than 4:00 PM Tuesday, or no shows will be billed)

MARCH 13

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"THE SCOPE" is published as the official Newsletter of the Buffalo-Western New York Chapter Construction Specification. It may also be used to exchange information and opinions. Contributions of articles from readers are welcome when proper sources are identified, but neither the Editor nor the Chapter assumes responsibility for the validity of accuracy of such articles. Any part of this newsletter may be reproduced by other CSI chapters, giving proper source identification. The appearance of any article, advertisement, product, service, names, picture, opinion or assertion does not constitute endorsement by the Chapter or its members. Contributions should be in the Editor's office by the second Friday of the month.

NFSA MEETING

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE
AT PRESS TIME
THERE WILL BE A MARCH MEETING

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AND PROGRAM

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I hope that everyone has enjoyed the short time of warm weather we've had and that we are all getting ready for a busy spring and summer season!

It has been a pleasure seeing you all at our chapter luncheon seminars and getting to know you.

Thank you so much to all of you who have brought guests and introduced more people to our chapter. We look forward to seeing more of you there.

As always, if you would like to become more active in the chapter activities please contact me. We would love to see new faces in positions of leadership. Any suggestions for future programs are welcome.

Cordially,

Your Chapter President
Elisabete Godden, CSI

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Your Editor of *The Scope* and greeter at the luncheons meetings will not be attending the March 10th meeting. He has not missed a meeting since taking on as Editor of *The Scope* in January 1994. He has always worked his schedule so as not to conflict with CSI, but it is more important to be with his granddaughter, Hana, in Atlanta. As a first year high student, she has auditioned with very competitive violinists, to be honored to play in the *Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra* as a first row violinist. He already missed the Fall and Winter Concerts of the *ASYO* in Atlanta, and the two concerts performed in Savannah early in March by the *All State of Georgia Youth Orchestra*. Hana ranks 8th as violinist in the State of Georgia. As a proud grandfather, he couldn't possibly miss the Spring concert on March 13th. The only flight he could get was on March 9, the day before the luncheon.

Thanks to Joanne Harris, CSI and a chapter Director, who has volunteered to take his place as greeter at the March 10th meeting. Enjoy your luncheon.

Alvin J. Oberst, PE, CSI Emeritus
Scope Editor



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We've all heard countless times about the amazing technological changes of the twentieth century, going from horse-drawn buggies to a car in every garage and landing on the moon, from telegraph to cell phones, from dirt roads to superhighways, from fresh food to frozen, and so on. Many of those changes resulted in improvements in business or in our standard of living, and are so much an accepted part of our lives that we take them for granted.

In communication, the last century saw a remarkable increase in speed and convenience. Everyone in the US has known about telephones as long as they can remember. A few of the old crank phones were around for a while, but the rotary dial phone was common in the '50s, the touch-tone phone came along in the '60s, and cell phones in the '70s.

But while phones have been great for oral communication for nearly a hundred years, getting documents from one place to another was a problem well into the second half of the last century. There wasn't much choice; sticking paper in an envelope and entrusting it to the post office was about it. And then came the fax.

I remember seeing Steve McGarrett getting faxes on Hawaii Five-O. The facsimile machine (fax) would create an image - usually of a ne'er do well he was tracking - on a spinning drum, a process that seemed to take half an hour to complete. Faxes were common around the world in the '80s, when faxing by computer came along.

Although the fax machine must have been a hard sell at first - "Great! I can get a copy of a document anywhere almost instantly! But who else has one?" - there were very good, and explainable, reasons to have a fax, which soon became an indispensable part of business. It was days faster than mail, and though the early machines were expensive, the obvious advantages increased demand, which led to lower costs and improved performance.

The cell phone has a similar history. The benefits of being able to contact someone nearly anywhere, or of being able to make a call without first finding a phone booth, were obvious, and demand again led to lower costs and improved performance. The advantages, again, could be explained.

And then we have the Internet and e-mail. Again, a tremendous improvement in ability to communicate. Virtually instantaneous transmission of documents, audio, and video at little cost. Although there was a lot of hype about the Internet, its benefits were easy to explain. I was an early participant, and a promoter, as the benefits were so obvious.

In contrast, the proponents of cable and satellite TV promised a wonderful future, full of educational and cultural programming, free of advertising. The supposed benefits were based on assumptions. The reality? Instead of four or five TV channels, we now have hundreds of channels of re-runs, "reality" shows, game shows, and other drivel - along with advertising.

The fax, the cell phone, and the Internet offered substantial improvements in communication, and were obviously useful in doing business. Today, we're being told how important it is to use social networking, and that to survive, a business *must* use it. But, unlike the fax, the cell phone, the Internet, and e-mail, there has been no clear benefit associated with the social network.

Let me make a distinction here; I'm talking about business. I like satellite TV because I like to watch movies, and I have a Facebook account because that's where my kids put pictures of their kids. Much of the fun of Facebook comes from the free-for-all commentary in response to comments and pictures, and the ease of posting both. But does that work for business? While a website will always deliver the desired message and image, Facebook, and, increasingly, LinkedIn, are chaotic, with the last visitor defining to the next visitor what the group is.

If anything, the use of LinkedIn and Facebook groups for business has confused communication by increasing the number of places to store and look for information, and Twitter's tweets are more of an annoying buzz. I'm not saying that these things don't have a place; I just haven't seen a good example of their use in business. While I am interested in what my friends are doing, on a business level I don't need to see personal details - when they feel good, when they have a headache, what the dog's latest trick is, and so on. When I go to Facebook, that's what I expect, but I don't want to see it when I'm doing business.

So far, random thoughts are what social networking seems to be about. I recently read an editorial in *Structural Engineering & Design*, which talked about the magazine's expansion into social media. In the same issue, the following were offered as "Top tweets" on the magazine's website:

- "Managers fear tighter budgets..."
- "George Washington University tests materials..."
- "Cleveland casino to break ground in 2011"
- "...bridge collapses..."
- "Will [one building be taller than another]?"

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Building the Future

Not one of these offered information that was of immediate interest, or would affect most readers soon enough to warrant the use of their time to read them. I looked through more tweets on the magazine's website, and again found nothing critical; everything there could have been handled in a monthly update. A bridge collapse may be interesting, and might be of immediate concern to a very small number of people, but the date of the tweet was a day after the collapse, so it wasn't exactly breaking news.

While writing this, I revisited the magazine's Facebook site. Virtually everything on the wall was a tweet, with a couple of Thanksgiving Day greetings, and a "hi everybody". There were several photos from a meeting, magazine covers, and no discussions. In short, it was mostly material that would appear in the magazine. The magazine is published both in print and on paper, so the Facebook site adds little that isn't already available.

A real concern is the fragmentation of communication. If I want to know more about something mentioned by *Structural Engineering & Design* should I go to the website, the LinkedIn site, the Facebook site, or Twitter? Does each have a unique function? If the same information is repeated everywhere, what is the point of having multiple sources? And if it's different, how will I know where to go? Who is making sure that it's current and correct? Of course, if Mark Zuckerberg has his way, there will be only one answer!

Many organizations and companies are struggling with these issues. Unfortunately, the unsubstantiated claims - "You must use Facebook!", "You won't survive if you don't tweet!", and so on - exacerbate the problem. I am not a Luddite; my experience with computers goes back to punch cards and FORTRAN, and I was an active and early promoter of websites and e-mail. I have created and maintained websites; e-mail and the Internet are essential to my job; and I have LinkedIn, Facebook, and even Twitter accounts.

CSI has about 120 websites, about forty-five LinkedIn groups, and half a dozen Facebook groups. About fifteen of the websites are down, and many of the remaining sites promote activities that are two or more months old as "coming events". The most recent comments in many of the LinkedIn groups are months old, and some go back more than a year. Isn't CSI the organization that promotes "say it once in the right place"? With information appearing in so many places, will it be clear, complete, concise, and correct? And isn't current important? It's better to have a static website with basic information than to have one that shows that no one cares about what is available.

Convince me! Would we not be better off with an organized, consistent Internet presence? If it's so important to be involved in social networking, shouldn't we be everywhere? If you click on the "share" icon on many websites, you get over three hundred options - should we use all of them? If we continue to create new groups in other networks, who will manage the content? Who has the time to follow all of them? At the moment, the lack of activity on nearly all of these websites and groups is not an enticement to participate; instead, it indicates a lack of both purpose and interest.

I do not object to progress; I believe that most advances in technology and communication have valid uses. However, I also believe in use of the appropriate tool for the job at hand. I don't kill flies with a shotgun, and I don't see the value of telling the business world that I'm at a great seminar or that I had a hard day at work.

I do think it's possible to have a website as a formal source of information, and a more casual presence on Facebook or LinkedIn. Having a group for people studying for an exam, as suggested by Joy Davis, is a good idea, and I'm sure there will be more. But, instead of making vague claims about why we simply can't survive without social networks, show us a real benefit. Don't put up new websites and groups just because it's easy; figure out what you want them to do, make a plan to achieve the goals, and keep them current and active.

Please - convince me!

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by Ralph Liebing, RA, CSI, CDT
Cincinnati, OH

It really is amazing some of the situations and dilemmas we get into! Seems that no matter how hard you try, they still occur-- all too often! And often unneeded and bordering on the silly.

You sincerely try to approach your work with the best you got-- valid information; wide and substantiating research; applied experience; well-founded specifications writing; best of intentions; intelligent approach to reasonable solutions for your clients, and still.....does anybody really pay attention? A product representative bemoans the fact he is not in your specification-- but his/her technical binder in your library is 5 years out of date [missing two mergers, and a rather substantially revamped product line!]. Paying attention?

Project Managers come by late in the game and ask IF you included this or that-- which was done as SOP early in the game. It is merely part of the standard, routine and usual situation-- why would you change it [you're not dumb and can retain and know what needs to be included] Oh, well! They're satisfied and while no "award" is in sight, you did do your job. But.... did anybody pay attention? Or do they simply accept what you give them with full confidence?

You challenge a Project Architect over some aspect of the work, and come out looking [or at least feeling] like a worm-like creature; slimy, wiggly, and somewhat useless. Why? You tried to straighten out a situation, provided decent, creditable reasoning and resolution, only to be dissed by someone who "knows better", plays better defense with seemingly stronger "tools" and talks louder because of higher status, or firm conviction. [Keep that file, though, this may/will be re-visited again-- soon!] Why didn't anybody pay attention, first off?

Why do we do so much re-work, where we do; undo; re-do; revise; undo; modify; and finally abandon or move back to the first solution? Wasn't anybody paying attention someplace along the line? If the keynote on the detail doesn't synch with the specifications, are the specifications wrong?

A real revelation is the final, close-out client meeting, when the owner tends to diss the design professionals because the project didn't turn out exactly as first developed and approved. Huh? There was \$100 million spent and the Owner finds out, NOW, that the project is not as desired? Didn't anybody pay attention-- to the numerous changes of scope, owner required change orders, shifting of logic, re-thinking of configurations, re-setting priorities, needs lists, re-visits to "done" decisions [and subsequent undoing], etc. au nauseum! Guess nobody thought to pay attention to the "small leaks" in the dam before it burst from "thinking overload"!

Was anybody paying attention when we moved to new, zippy software for document control and storage [i.e., storing that which is already stored], only to convolute our entire process and upset our norm [as in "fixing that which is unbroken"]? Creating all new simply because some software designer had a nightmare that turned into a new wave of doing old things-- better????? Better for whom? [think profit for software folks--designer, manufacturer, seller, distributor, and them other folks in the cave, who without paying attention merely "pay the freight" but can boast use the latest software].

Department meetings have evolved into long discussions about what needs to be done because new software is about. So we review what has been done [for years?], adjust our policies [again!] and change our operations to meet the parameters and nuances of the software. [what drives what?] Little is discussed about "the department" overall, so it would seem that the design and the document production efforts are really functions of the software and not vice versa-- what?

Yep, just plain gripping here, but all the same is this not all true—at least to some extent? We are so busy that we outsmart ourselves often times, and really messing ourselves up. Nothing is straight line any more, and even if it did happen to be, we would find a way to make it different, crooked and skewed. And guess what-- chances are, nobody would really pay attention anyway!! [too busy working on their own mess!].

We KNOW our work is essential and works to the good of all, but I guess being taken for granted is the reward we get. Few pay attention feeling and assuming that our work is right and will do its job.

Wonder why that tends to be so ignored and such a secret?

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13 January 2011, 1:15 PM – 1:45 PM

Attendees: Elisabete Godden, Prsident; Kevin Mahoney, President Elect; Robert H. Ruml, Secretary; Deborah Siener, Treasurer; Ted Czajkowski, Program/Education Chair; Kevin O'Beirne, Certification; Sharon Trippany, Director; Philip Lechner, Awards Director; Jim Grucella, Director; Joanne Harris, Director; Al Oberst, Scope Editor.

Topics of Discussion:

1. Lunch/Program Meeting: The February program is set. We still are looking for programs for March and May. However, Ted has forwarded program applications to several possible presenters and will advise the Board at the next meeting. If you have any suggestions for future programs please submit them to Ted.
 - Al will not be able to attend the March 10th lunch/program meeting. Joanne Harris volunteered to take attendance, distribute nametags and collect the registration fee for guests.
 - Sharon Trippany suggested that one option may be to have a code review program.
2. Expenses: Al reported a \$76.34 charge for various office supplies. Board approved expenditure.
3. Awards: Phil Lechner is currently reviewing national correspondence revelent to award possibilities. Phil will advise the Board at the next meeting.
4. Membership: Al reported that our chapter lost some members. We now have 57 registered members.
 - Sharon Trippany commented that she has contacted several of the local colleges and has encouraged them to ask their students attend our meetings.
5. Scope: Al reported that we now have 18 paid advertisers in the scope.

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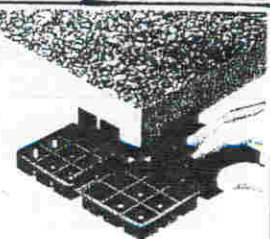
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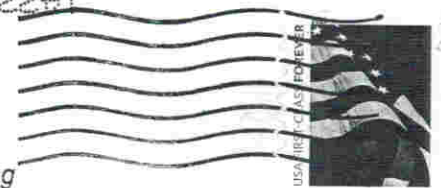
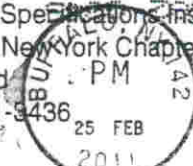
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