



SPECIGRAM

Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Chapter, Construction Specifications Institute

June, 2013

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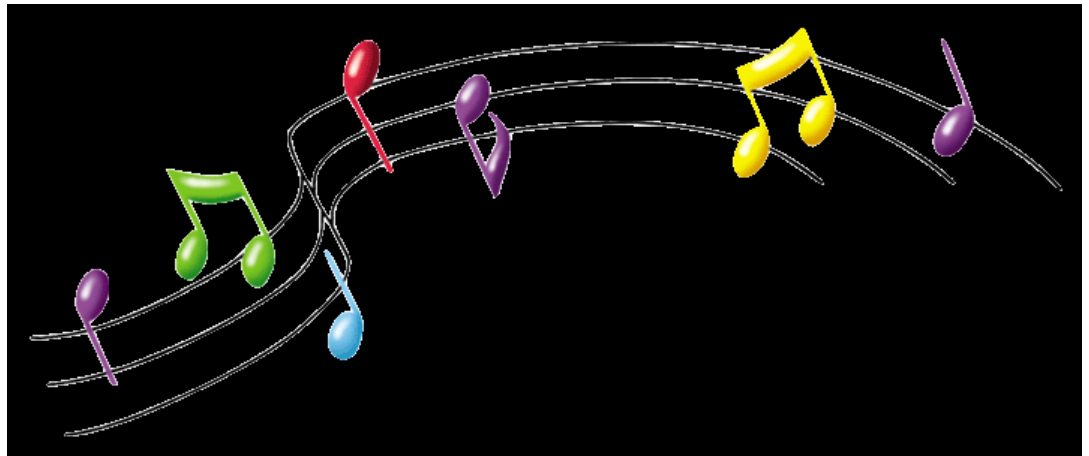
CSI Pittsburgh Chapter Mission Statement

1. To support and promote the mission and core values of the Institute.
2. To help its members perform their jobs better by providing education and promoting certification programs.
3. To provide an opportunity for networking to facilitate project team building.

June 11 Meeting

Membership Appreciation & Awards Banquet

Live Music Entertainment



**CEFALO'S RESTAURANT AND NIGHTCLUB
428 WASHINGTON AVENUE
CARNEGIE, PA 15106**

**Cocktails 5:00 p.m.
Dinner 6:00 p.m.
Ceremony 7:00 p.m.**

Cost is \$35/person.

Reservations by **Friday June 7** to MAZell@NationalGypsum.com



President's Message

June 2013

Miki Vargo, Chapter President



Where has the year gone? It is hard to believe it is already June and we are half way through 2013 and at the end of our CSI fiscal year. Looking back on my first term as President, I can't help but feel a sense of pride for all that we have accomplished so far. I began this term with big ideas and goals; and while some are still in the works, due to the help of our committed, loyal membership base, many of those goals have come to fruition.

After the Institute revamped their CDT Certification program, our Certification Chair, Mike Bosco has successfully established Phase 1 of our new CDT Certification Prep Course, the Home Study Course. This program consists of a CD which includes all of the resource materials needed to prepare for and pass the CDT, including the Project Delivery Practice Guide, referenced literature, power point presentations, flash cards, etc. After developing this program and launching it earlier this year, we learned that our chapter is the only place that one can find all of the reference material needed to take the CDT in one location. As a result, we have sent the Home Study Course to candidates in Savannah, Georgia and had inquiries for as far away as Ontario, Canada. We have also received notification that the individual that purchased our course from Georgia took his CDT this Spring and passed. I'd like to thank Mike for all of his hard work and the endless hours that he put into developing this course. We are not done, however, we are in the process of developing similar guides for the CCCA, CCS and CCPR.

For those of you who attended the March program, "Are you Smarter than a Spec Writer?" you were able to experience the results of Mike Moyta's tireless student outreach efforts. After years of trying to gain access to the local universities and expose the AEC students to CSI and what we have to offer, Student Outreach Chair, Mike Moyta has done a wonderful job of finally exposing CSI to these students. We initially offered a presentation in the Fall at CMU titled 'Spec Writing for Non-Spec Writers', presented by Denny Buirge and Scott Keener; we have had multiple students attend our meetings; we have provided the local universities with copies of Master Format for their libraries; and most recently through our March program, awarded students scholarship funds for their participation. This is hopefully just the beginning of our Student Outreach and Scholarship Program. Great Job Mike!! Thank you to all of the members that have welcomed our student guests at our meetings. As many of you would agree, one of the biggest assets of CSI membership is the members themselves. Thank you for demonstrating that benefit. *(continued on page 3)*



President's Message (cont'd)

June 2013

Soon to be launched is our new Chapter Website. Kate Schuster and David Miller have been working endlessly to revamp our website and make it a little more user friendly and informative. The amount of time Kate has devoted to creating the new website while running a business is remarkable. David's help and guidance as Webmaster of the Region website has been invaluable. We are all excited to "go live" with our new website and should be ready later this month. So please, keep your eyes out.

I began my term as President by accepting our Chapter's 9th Outstanding Chapter Commendation Award at CONSTRUCT, in Phoenix, Arizona. Last month, I was honored to accept 9 awards presented by the Middle Atlantic Region to members of our chapter at MARC in Gettysburg, PA. Our Chapter won 9 out of the 18 total awards given by the Region. I'm not exaggerating when I say, the other 16 chapters represented in our region were a little annoyed with Pittsburgh taking home most of the honors.

These are just a few of the accomplishments we have made this year. I could go on and on acknowledging all of the individuals that have made this year so remarkable, but I think that would turn my President's Message into more of a novel. Instead, I encourage all of you to attend this month's Member Appreciation Banquet on June 11th. The amount of time our members put into making our Chapter as outstanding as it is, is truly remarkable and worth acknowledgement.

-Miki Vargo





Member Profile: Frank Hughes

June 2013

Frank Hughes



Tell us about your spouse: Her name is Nancy. We met in college. She has been teaching for 33 years. Born and raised in Pittsburgh.

Tell us about your job: My job consists of selling concrete restoration and repair products along with leveling, patching and tile setting products. I call on architects & engineers, general contractors, and sell the products through distribution.

What part of your job do you enjoy the most? Getting out everyday because each day brings a new challenge.

What year did you join CSI? 2001.

Why did you join CSI? To get involved and to meet the local architects. To be involved in what is going on in and around Pittsburgh.

Did you have a CSI recruiter/mentor? Bob Bailey was the person who suggested I join.

What do you see as the value of CSI membership? Staying in touch with the local architect and company representatives. To see how others see the markets we work in.

Is there something you would change about our Chapter if you could? I would try to get greater participation among the architectural firms and manufactures in the market. We need more members to participate and attend the monthly meetings.

Tell us a memorable CSI experience: I really enjoy the golf outings and project tours. The most memorable tour for me was the Allegheny County Morgue and Crmime Lab complex.

What would you want somebody considering CSI membership to know? It is a great group of people from all aspects of the industry.

What would people be surprised to know about you? My college degree is in education but I have never taught a day.



Is That In The Spec?

By Josh Telenko, CSI
General Construction Estimator for Baer & Associates, LLC

June 2013

In the discipline of construction consulting and estimating, I have the opportunity of reviewing many different projects at various phases of design and completion from many different firms. Almost always, there are areas, whether in the drawings or specifications, that can leave an estimator scratching his head (and explain large swings in cost). With the added complexities of modern projects and the increasing demands of owners and contractors to show detail sufficient to reduce change orders and construction delays, there are a few areas that are easily addressed and can create very consistent budgets throughout the design.

While as CSI members we often talk about specifications, obviously, there is one area that can lend itself to accurate design budgets that limit drastic cost increases (or decreases) and that is a well written Project Narrative at early design phases. At Concept and Schematic phases of design, I have often seen where architects have a very good idea of what materials they want to use to achieve design goals and meet owner expectations; yet, often only an outline spec, at best, is pulled together for the cost consultant to work from, and has a lack of specific information. This is understandable as the design is in its infancy. However, a costly example of design intent not being shared openly took place with a museum and art gallery I worked on a few years ago. The intent, from the beginning of design, was a very high-end acoustic plaster ceiling, which was not a common finish in most buildings, but a more standard acoustic gypsum wallboard system was. When the completed specification was made available (after two rounds of completed estimates) the high-end system was discovered in the spec and resulted in a 400-500% cost increase in the ceiling system for the building. This had not been described in the narrative and was a predominant building feature that created other design sacrifices to accommodate for it and could have been avoided.

One of the biggest areas that can cause confusion and result in inaccurate costing is reuse of specifications from previous projects. A particular instance stands out for me, where projects for two dormitories on the same campus were similar but construction was five years apart. In that five year gap, the university discovered that certain floor finishes and exterior cladding (primarily selected to reduce costs) had not performed as intended. However, these same materials found their way into the specs for the new project through two phases of design until finally discovered, causing a new and better material to be selected. Of course the added cost to a project almost ready for bid is not an easy pill to swallow, neither for me as an estimator nor for the architect, who then was required to explain these items to the university and develop an extensive Value Engineering list, all of which added to design fees, consultant fees, and created some uncomfortable meetings. *(continued on page 6)*



Is That In The Spec? (cont'd)

June 2013

Another area in which I've heard a lot of feedback is the large jump in cost from Design Development to Pre-Bid or Construction Documents. While meeting with potential clients I have heard over and over about how a project was on budget through DD and when a CD estimate is produced the cost goes through the roof. I think this can be directly related to open sharing of information, especially on large projects. I have found that most firms realize that their drawings or specifications have shortcomings or areas of incompleteness. I do not see there being any shame in providing estimators with information that may change, or with a direction the design may be going but isn't quite there yet. Part of clarifying the intent of the project falls to the construction consultant/estimator through a series of questions on unclear areas known to increase costs (i.e. proprietary MEP systems, high-end finishes, deep foundations, etc.).

Overall, drawings and specifications seemed to have increased in accuracy and completeness but with the added reliance on technology the human input and finer details can get glossed over. I have focused here on pre-construction, as that is where the majority of my experience is, but there are many more examples in the pursuit of creating seamless documents for construction.

-Josh Telenko

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May Meeting – CSI Pittsburgh tours Parran Hall / Graduate School of Public Health at Pitt

June 2013



Greg Newman, project manager, and Jim Sheehan, principal in charge, of Renaissance Three Architects (R3A) served as tour guides for the Parran Hall Addition and Renovations, Graduate School of Public Health, at the University of Pittsburgh.

Buffet dinner following the tour, at Joe Mama's in Oakland.

