



SPEE.tectonics

CSI Houston Chapter
The Construction Specifications Institute

December 2013

January 27, 2014 meeting:

PLACE: H.E.S.S. Building
5430 Westheimer Road

TIME:

5:30 P.M. (Registration and
mixer)

6:00 P.M. (Evening Meal and
Meeting)

COST:

Gratis to CSI members;
\$35.00 to non members at
the door.

RESERVATIONS: Go to:
<http://www.csihouston.org>

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CSI Houston January Program "The Construction Outlook for 2014"

One does not have to work long in the construction industry to learn how sensitive this segment of the economy is to fluctuations at the local and national levels.



The boom and bust nature of this segment of the economy affects manufacturing (building materials), construction, and design services. We learn to read the economic news to find about housing starts and unemployment, but how does that affect us in the Houston area? For a number of years, the Houston Chapter CSI has started the year by asking Pat Kiley to share his thoughts on the economic state of the construction industry in the Houston area: How we did last year and what we can expect in the coming year. His connections throughout the network of local government and institutional owners, private developers, builders, and designers, put him in a unique position to provide a comprehensive perspective about what new projects are being planned.

Pat Kiley is a founding principal of Kiley Advisors, a consulting firm that advises CEO's and Senior Executives on matters of Leadership and Strategy. His firm conducts research and publishes an annual forecast of the Houston commercial construction marketplace, and he speaks to many groups about the market outlook. The firm is retained by general and specialty contractors to assist with market strategy, relationship strategy, and leadership development and succession. His firm also conducts workshops and retreats with senior leaders of many companies and associations for the purposes of strategic planning, best practices evaluations and team building.

Prior to founding the firm in 2004, Mr. Kiley served for 21 years with the Houston Chapter of Associated General Contractors of America, Inc., (AGC) a 1,000 member trade association representing General Contractors, Specialty Contractors, Suppliers and Service Firms. He was recognized for his work by receiving his own association's highest honor, The Master Builder Award, in 2004 and by a named Scholarship Fund in 2006. Most recently, he was awarded an Honorary Life Membership to the Houston AGC. He was inducted into the Construction Hall of Fame at Texas A&M University, Department of Construction Science in 2007. He has also been honored by the Minority Contractor community.

Make sure your plans for the new year include joining Houston Chapter CSI on Monday, January 27, 2014, at the HESS Club for this program.

**CSI HOUSTON CHAPTER
2013—2014 CHAPTER OFFICERS**

President Robert P. Byrne, CSI
(713) 464-4491
rbyrne@ampbrick.com

Past President Holly Jordan, CSI, CCS, LEED AP, SCIP
(713) 366-0320
hjordan@jordanconsultants.com

President Elect Neil Byrne, CSI, CDT, CPA
(713) 354-1100
npbyrne@byrnetals.com

VP Finance/ Admin. Chuck Vojtech, CSI
(281) 227-3577
chuck@rpcinc.com

VP Professional Development Tim Wilson, CSI
(832) 289-6765
twilson@weatherizationpartners.com

VP Member Services Tom Atwell, CSI
(713) 877-8879
Tom.atwell@cushwake.com

VP Public Services Don Smith, CSI, CCS, RA, LEED AP
(713) 688-0092
don.smith315@sbcglobal.net

Secretary Betsy Finch, CSI
(713) 806-3401
bfinch@southtexasreps.com

Treasurer Robert M. Cook, CSI, AHC
(832) 496-9507
Robert.Cook@sbdinc.com

2013—2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director through 2015 Amy Salmeron, CSI, CDT
(713) 460-5216
asalmeron@assaabloydss.com

Director through 2015 Grant Groeschel, CSI, AIA, LEED AP
(713) 934-4891
grant.groeschel@assaabloy.com

Director through 2014 Amy Peevey, PE, RRO, CDT
(713) 467-9840
apeevey@besgrp.com

Director through 2014 Bill Fairbanks, CSI, CCPR
(281) 227-3577
fairbanks@rpcinc.com

Director through 2016 Don Ude, CSI
(281) 685-0164
dude127@sbcglobal.net

Director through 2016 Logan Vits, CSI, CCPR, LEED GA
(713) 703-5201
lvits@assaabloydss.com

Board Advisory Director Doug Frank, FCSI, CCS
(281) 660-6246
specman.doug@gmail.com

2013—2014 CSI HOUSTON SPEC.TECTONICS

SPEC.tectonics Editor Don Smith, CSI, CCS, RA, LEED AP
(713) 688-0092
don.smith315@sbcglobal.net

2013—2014 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Programs J. Peter Jordan, FCSI, AIA, CCS, LEED AP
(281) 366-0320
jpjordan@jordanconsultants.com

Membership Bill Lundsford, CSI, CDT
(817) 300--7262
SLGillespie@GOAenterprises.com

Certification Tim Wilson, CSI
(832) 289-6765
twilson@weatherizationpartners.com

Technical J. Peter Jordan, FCSI, CCS, LEED AP, SCIP AIA
(713) 366-0320
jpjordan@jordanconsultants.com

Awards Amy Salmeron, CSI, CDT
(713) 460-5216
asalmeron@assaabloydss.com

Continuing Education Mark Koehler, CSI
(713) 781-6006
mkoehler@siplast.com

Academic Affairs Al Pasek, CSI, CCPR
(713) 880-4343
al.pasek@lsdecker.com

Public Relations Don Vernon, CSI
(713)-520-0155
don@aiahouston.org

Product Show (CTE) Di Ann Reid, CSI, CCS, CCCA, LEED AP
(713) 844-0091
diann_reid@gensler.com

Golf Tournament Neil Byrne, CSI, CDT, CPA
(281) 354-1100
Neil.byrne@byrnetals.com

Table Top Amy Peevey, PE, RRO, CDT
(713) 467-9840
apeevey@besgrp.com

CIC Delegate Bill Fairbanks, CSI, CCPR
(281) 227-3577
fairbanks@rpcinc.com

2013—2014 CSI HOUSTON WEBSITE

Webmaster Logan Vits, CSI, CCPR, LEED AP
(281) 703-5201
lvits@assaabloydss.com

2012—2013 CSI HOUSTON FOUNDATION

President, Al Pasek, CSI, CCPR
(713) 880-4343
al.pasek@lsdecker.com

Past President Greg Roberts, FAIA, FCSI, CCS, ACHA, LEED AP

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Director Jeff Holstien, CSI, CDT

CSI SOUTH CENTRAL REGION (<http://www.scr-csi.org>) / INSTITUTE LEADERS (<http://www.csinet.org>)

SC Region President Holly Jordan, CSI, CCS, LEED AP, SCIP
(713) 366-0320
hjordan@jordanconsultants.com

SC Region President Elect Melody A. Stinson, CSI, CCS, AIA, LEED AP
(405) 942-7337
mas@rees.com

Institute Director Kirby M. Davis, CSI, CDT
(203) 671-7210
kirby-davis@hotmail.com

Institute President Casey Robb, FCSI, CCPR
DuPont Building Innovations, Acworth, GA
casey.f.robb@usa.dupont.com

December 2013 President's Message

by Robert P. Byrne, CSI
President, CSI Houston Chapter



The November Membership meeting met our average attendance even though it was the Thanksgiving week and the weather created quite a task traveling to the HESS Club. We even had five of our Prairie View A&M Architectural Student members come to town and attend. It appears we are still on track

with the panel discussion programs and special thanks go to Peter Jordan for the hard work putting these together for each meeting.

Our Holiday Party at 'Crisp' turned out to be a very nice evening for those attending. The food was great and the venue worked well for our group. It was also really good to see some of our retired members and their spouses come out for the event.

Remember our upcoming January Meeting is planned to be the kick off for another great year for CSI Houston. We are again having New Product Table Tops and the 2014 Outlook from Pat Kiley. Plan ahead and reserve your spot at this well attended meeting.

The Chapter is moving ahead with a 5-year planning meeting sometime in March and we will keep you informed with the results.

Your Chapter Board extends the Best of Wishes to all our membership for these Holidays and the upcoming New Year.

CSI Region News: The Core Missions of a CSI Region by J.W. Mollohan, CSI, CCPR, CSI North Central Region President

By virtue of our inclusion in the Institute Board's annual transition planning session, the leaders of CSI's ten regions gathered recently in Atlanta and again at CONSTRUCT in Nashville. Thinking back to Atlanta, a lively discussion of common issues ensued.

Endeavoring to hold our core mission in constant sight, we sought to define the services provided our constituent chapters and, ultimately, our members. The items listed below garnered multiple endorsements:

- Sharing best practices among our chapters' and leaders
- Aiding chapters in maintaining minimum operating standards
- Creating a sense of community among the region's chapters
- Offering guidance for each of the chapters' standing committees
- Sharing educational programs and speakers among chapters
- Providing leadership training for chapter and region leaders
- Recognizing achievement at all levels of CSI
- Establishing academic networks among regional schools
- Educating our regional membership on Institute initiatives

Most encouraging was a common statement of commitment to listening to our chapters and members, so that the services we deliver are those most desired. This local connection is difficult for Institute to replicate. As a body, we are confident that the regions remain an integral link in the chain of information from member to Institute.

As region leaders continue to meet, we will be sure to pass along the great info they continue to talk about.

Add your thoughts on what you think our Region should do for the Houston Chapter and send them to SCR President, Holly Jordan.

CSI Houston Chapter Board Meeting Minutes
Location: HESS Building
5430 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX
October 28, 2013

Present: Amanda Carrington, Betsy Finch, Bill Fairbanks, Bill Lundsford, Chuck Vojtech, Di Ann Reid, Don Smith, Don Ude, Grant Groeschel, Holly Jordan, J. Peter Jordan, Jeff Holstien, Neil Byrne, Robert Byrne, Tom Atwell

President Robert Byrne called the meeting to order at 4.01 p.m.
The September 2013 Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

REPORTS

Finance/Administration: Chuck Vojtech

Neil discussed reviewing the budget in the second half of the year and that the chapter can be more conservative in certain areas, such as the golf tournament. Chuck, Robert Byrne, Bob Cook and Neil will meet in January 2014 to discuss the budget.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Cook
No report.

Professional Development: Tim Wilson

Continuing Education: The Board discussed the CDT class schedule. Holly mentioned offer a CDT boot camp to the members.

Academics Affairs: Al Pasek
No report.

Certification: Tim Wilson
No report.

Technical Committee: J. Peter Jordan
No report.

Member Services: Tom Atwell

Programs: J. Peter Jordan
J. Peter discussed the January 2014 meeting. Holly reported she would ask 2014 CSI Institute President Bob Simmons to attend the meeting. The Board discussed notifying members of the chapter meeting several times during the month. First email would be sent out the beginning of the month, the second would follow a few weeks later. The last announcement would be sent closer to the meeting date and include more specific information relating to the program.

Membership: Bill Lundsford
Bill reported membership at one hundred and seventy seven, including eleven new members.

Awards: Amy Salmeron
No report.

Table Top Display: Amy Peevey
No report.

Personal/Professional Development: Doug Frank / Di Ann Reid
No report.

Public Service: Don Smith

Golf Tournament: Neil Byrne
Neil reported that the golf tournament was a huge success, brought in over \$17,000.00 and netted approximately \$10,500.00. Also Robert stated he would contact Amy to about the photos she took at the tournament. Don will include the photos in the next chapter newsletter. The Board discussed comments made that not every member received notice of the tournament.

SPEC.tectoncis: Don Smith

Don reported the newsletter had been posted to the chapter website and emailed to chapter members. Don said Logan Vits would provide a technical article to include in the newsletter and he asked Grant to provide an article as well.

Electronic Communications: Logan Vits
No report.

Other Business:

Five-Year Plan: Jeff Holstien
Jeff discussed the benefits of a plan for the chapter. Pat Kiley Advisors would provide the program. Neil commented he thinks this is money well spent, reinvestment into CSI. Jeff will discuss further at the next CSI planning meeting.

Foundation: Al Pasek
Robert stated he will discuss with Al if a non-CSI member is permitted to be a board member on the Foundation.

Holiday Party:
December 3, 2103, 4:30 p.m. at Crisp Wine and Beer Eatery.

Meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Betsy Finch, CSI
Chapter Secretary

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**FEATURE YOUR PRODUCTS WITH A
TABLE TOP DISPLAY**

At each monthly meeting, the Chapter encourages Industry Members to provide a table top display of their products and services for the inspection and education of those attending the meeting.

The table top display is also encouraged to be presented during the social hour and after the program for any questions by attendees.

The presentation fee is \$200 for members and \$250 for non-members, or free with a Golf Sponsorship pledge.

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Contact Don Smith at
(713) 688-0092 or don.smith315@sbcglobal.net
for more information.

2013 CSI Houston Brian Harrington Golf Classic Sponsors

By Robert Byrne, CSI

The CSI Houston Chapter wishes to thank the following for their support in this year's Golf Tournament. Your support is the main funding vehicle for our annual scholarships awarded through our Foundation. Our membership should remember these sponsors in return with their support in specifications or referrals for business.

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Pella Windows & Doors * WHR Architects

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Worst Case

By Sheldon Wolfe, RA, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, CSC

IN THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY, IN E-MAIL, AND ON THE INTERNET, USE OF UPPER-CASE IS LIMITED. STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT MOST PEOPLE FIND IT HARDER TO READ UPPER-CASE, AND TODAY'S DIGITAL ETIQUETTE VIEWS USE OF ALL UPPER-CASE AS SHOUTING. WHY, THEN, DO WE CONTINUE TO USE IT ON DRAWINGS?

One of the reasons architects and engineers have used only uppercase may have been the difficulty of learning to letter. I don't know what today's students think about lettering, but when I was in architecture school, developing a "hand" was seen as a critical part of the architect's identity. Shortly after graduating, I wrote a check at a department store. I still recall my swelling sense of pride when, after looking at the check, the cashier said, "Oh, you must be an architect!"

But for some reason, perhaps just laziness, mastery of uppercase letters was as far as most of us got; I recall only a few who extended their lettering skills to lowercase. Otherwise, I can't imagine why architects and engineers have limited their writing to uppercase, given the advantages of using mixed case.

There are many studies and many opinions regarding the benefits of mixed case lettering. Many claim the shape of the words affects recognition, the theory being that uppercase letters have no shape, while lowercase letters have parts that stick up above or down below the rest of the letters, making them easier to recognize. Others dispute that theory, yet still see evidence that comprehension is enhanced with mixed case text.

Some suggest that the effect is largely based on familiarity. Because we're accustomed to reading in mixed case, we do it well, but if we read uppercase all the time, we would read just as well. That makes sense; early in my career, when I frequently met with clients, I would orient the drawings for the client, and I eventually could read upside down text nearly as fast as right side up. Even so, we are surrounded by mixed case text, so why not take advantage of its familiarity?

The US government is convinced that uppercase makes reading needlessly difficult. The Federal Highway Administration has decreed that when road signs are replaced, the new ones must use mixed case. And, in April of this year, the US Navy announced a number of changes intended to improve communication, among them being the introduction of lowercase letters in the body of messages. It turns out that there once was good reason for the use of uppercase letters; early teletypes had no way to send lowercase!

I often wonder about the inconsistent logic applied to drawings and to text. Architects readily accept the importance of using line weight, poché, and white space to make drawings easier to understand. They correctly would reject the notion of using but one line weight, no poché, and crowding details together; after all, those actions would make the drawings harder to read! Yet many of those same architects care nothing about the fonts, line spacing, line length, and white space used in project manuals. Worse, a few of them see written text as another means of artistic expression, and choose fonts that are difficult to read. They simply fail to understand that poor text layout can interfere with comprehension.

Please - unlock that caps lock! Use mixed case!

© 2013, Sheldon Wolfe, RA, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, CSC

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I have always wonder why draftsman care more about style than the content of a note! I can remember one particular note where the draftsman was attempting to give a direction to the Contractor by saying "Make invisible" and adding an arrow pointing to a defect. Of course Contractors are always trying to complete an architects education. He pointed to the location at the site with pride, saying "See, I did it," although nothing had actually been changed! **Ed.**

“Strictly SMITH-ly”

“The Future of the Specification Writer”

By Donald F. Smith, Jr., CSI CCS RA LEED AP

Over the past decade there has been discussions of how Computer Aided Design and Drafting (CADD) and Building Information Modeling (BIM) is going to change architecture, engineering and construction practice.

CADD certainly has made the description of complex shape and building construction easier by being able to have the opportunity to perform precision calculations on where, how many, spacial relationships, and BIM objects has made it possible to add properties to a CADD object to uniquely describe each object and allow to computer to keep track of how many, where, location conflicts (collisions), and even globally change each CADD object.

What it has not been able to do so far, is to allow an a complex objects (assembly) .properties to be expanded into a specification. This is partly because of how we describe the different CADD objects themselves. When we describe an assembly, such as “Concrete Masonry Units (CMU)” in the specifications we describe a Work result which contains many, many elements, some similar and some different that collectively make the assembly function in a particular way and have a particular appearance. The CMU block, for example may be many sizes, many shapes, many colors, many textures, and have different properties to provide different functions. Even considering only one size unit

I have yet to meet a CADD operator who was knowledgeable enough to put the correct shapes, sizes, textures finishes, and colors into the model so that it accurately describes the masonry units require at each location in the object model. To do so, he would have to have the mind of the mason and hope that he saw eye-to-eye with him and that they both had identical points to start from.

The biggest problem for BIM is whether the creator of the BIM model is going to generalize or be specific in what he describes. There are some outside influences here. Depending on the level of detail, you could end up describing the project as it might be built, at least from the BIM model creator’s point of view. The other problem is that you don’t have to add much detail for the drawing file size to become unmanageable.

The working drawings used by a Contractor are not an exact recipe or description of a series of steps necessary to build a project. The Drawings are merely nothing

more or less than the description of what the project should look like when completed. The Project Manual, likewise, is merely nothing more or less than an organized list of the materials assemblies, equipment, and procedures required to build the project.

The choices in what goes into a project seem to be trending toward more complex, rather than simpler. Fifty years ago a specifiers job was a lot less complex. What we have here is not a failure of the specifier to communicate, but rather a great deal more to communicate.

If you look at design trends at the end of the forties, few materials were used and designers sculpted with light and a few colors. Today there is a trend toward complex repetition using color, texture and different materials to create unique spaces. But happily this is not universally so. I think the specifier will be around for a long time.

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you might wind up someplace else.”

Yogi Berra

... Just my opinion,

Donald F. Smith, Jr., CSI, CCS, RA, LEED™ AP

CSI Houston Foundation Preparing Leaders for Tomorrow

By Al Pasek, CSI, CCPR, President, CSI Houston Foundation

The CSI Houston Foundation, Inc. was established to provide scholarship opportunities for deserving students who have selected a degree goal within the construction industry.

In 2013, we were able to fund five scholarships for \$2,000 each to architectural/engineering students with 60 hours or more time toward an academic degree within the construction industry. By exposing them to CSI and all its benefits, we believe these students will apply their education to become active leaders of tomorrow within their chosen field and CSI.

Continued support by the membership of CSI Houston and sponsors of CSI activities will offer the funds necessary to make our Foundation play an important role in advancing educational opportunities for students within the Gulf Coast Region.

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CSI Houston

Construction Specifications Institute
 P.O. Box 79285
 Houston, TX 77279-9285
 (713) 627-2283, Ext. 319

www.csihouston.org

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Dec. 2013 Through Jan. 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
DEC. 1	2	3 Holiday Party at Crisp in the Heights	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 No December Meeting	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Years Eve	JAN 1, 2014 New Years Day	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 Planning Mtg 2:30 pm; 9434 Katy Fwy, Suite 170	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Martin Luther King Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 CSI Houston Board / Chapter Meeting—HESS	28	29	30	31	FEB 1