



Greetings From the President....

May 2010

Election and survey results are in. Thank you for voting and taking the time to share your opinions on our chapter's performance. The survey results are an important component of the chapter's strategic planning process so if you haven't completed the survey, please do so and take advantage of this opportunity to have your voice heard.

If you haven't yet, make your reservation for our annual awards banquet on May 18th at Osterio Via Stato. Now that's Italian. I encourage your attendance to witness the swearing in of our new president and board of directors and of course this banquet, like all of our celebrations, will be a wonderful time.

We have a good sized Chicago contingent attending Construct 2010 representing our chapter. Besides attending seminars and walking the floor; they will be promoting Chicago for Construct 2011. I've asked Cathy to include our ad page from the convention brochure in the newsletter. Our Convention Promotion Committee did a marvelous job pulling this together; check it out.

Finally, look for information on these two upcoming summer events. First, look for our upcoming "unique" summer event. Hint: You don't need to be a golfer to attend. Lastly, dust off your Chicago Bears gear and don the colors at NCR Conference scheduled for July 29 -31 in Green Bay Wisconsin.

I'd like to thank our Chapter members, Board of Directors, Committee Members and Cathy for all their hard work in making this the best chapter in the country.

John Birazzi

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Greetings From the President....

April 2010

It's hard to believe my term is nearly over; it feels like I just started yesterday. It appears the struggles from 2009 continue into 2010. It's been a tough year so far for everyone including the CSI. Without much building going on, the pay cuts, lay offs, shortened work week, and other much more imaginative ideas continue to keep businesses afloat. Our chapter has had its challenges too this year. Membership and renewal numbers are down but we are holding our own. We've had to "tighten our belts" but financially we are on budget.

I don't believe you've noticed much change in what we do as a chapter. It's a testament to how diligently our board, committee and volunteer members have worked to keep things running "as usual". The quality of our roundtable programs, both professional and industry, have been excellent this year. Our monthly programs have been of the highest quality with great topics, presenters, tabletops, and what a venue! The Union League Club continues to be an accommodating and comfortable venue with some of the best food around, especially those deserts. Even with the economy being what it is, we continue to have record turnouts at our monthly programs. If you haven't had a chance to participate in a roundtable or monthly program, it's not too late; we still have April and May.

ALA has been a good partner. The Architecture Conference once again was a success with a record number of manufacturers represented and attendance exceeded expectations. The February Building Enclosure program once again didn't disappoint. It's amazing how we seem to never get bored with the subject building enclosures. You would think after years of all these programs we'd have the envelope figured out. Guess not, based on all the case studies presented.

I bet you didn't know the CDT certification study classes recently concluded; isn't it amazing how the monumental task of organizing and executing these well attended classes runs quietly in the background every year. Our Holiday bash besides being a BLAST, more than doubled the charitable donation all of which went to the Greater Food Depository. How about the "Change Order" transition to an electronic newsletter? Ooops, there was a whole Presidents letter about than; I'm starting to ramble...

The board slate for next year's election was finalized so look for election information and PLEASE VOTE. The board also wants to hear from you so please take the time to reply to the forthcoming email survey and let us know us know how we've done and what we best can serve you in future. Awards banquet is scheduled for May 18, so please mark your calendars.

I'd like to end with a special thank you to our board, committee members, and volunteers and of course Cathy who in addition to dealing with each their own personal challenges in this tough economy have made a commitment to do what it takes to make this such a great organization. Thank you to our members for their continued support of our chapter.



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Greetings From the President....

March 2010

I'm finally going to take the plunge; really, I am. I was disappointed that I missed our recent Industry Roundtable on Social Media, it would have saved me some research time. It seems everyday I hear something about "social media" and its finally getting my attention. For those of you who don't know me too well; you're looking at somewhat of a technology dinosaur. Email and internet is about it for me. I share a cell phone with my wife and guess where it is? In her purse. Blackberry? Twitter? Facebook? Why? It's just another communication tool to keep track of! Who's got the time? Well I'm beginning to change my ways. I set up a LinkedIn profile and it was pretty simple. So now I'm looking into Twitter and plan on starting a Facebook page.

Twitter is a free service that lets you keep in touch with people through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: what are you doing? It can be accessed on the web by computer or mobile device. It allows you to share your thoughts in 140 words or less as often as you'd like. You can also follow someone on twitter by getting notices about new posts and reading or responding to them. Did you know that Lance Armstrong has almost 2 1/2 million followers? Talk about being able to get the word out! What a powerful tool. I've been thinking about tweeting a punchlist items or field observations. This could be really cool! You can see why twitter has received a lot of attention.

Twitter is just one of the several social media options on the web today. Other outlets include various wikis, blogs, and networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Next time you're sitting at your desk eating lunch reading news headlines on the internet check out one of these sites. I set up a LinkedIn profile and its amazing how I've been able to reconnect with friends, fellow architects, clients and industry members that I've lost touch with. Pretty neat stuff. I'm planning to set up a personal Facebook site profile my hobbies, ok, I mean hobby, cycling. Then I wouldn't have to use my president's letters to share my cycling adventures. Just have to remember everything you post is public knowledge so things will find a way of getting out.

I'm learning Twitter has become popular with manufacturers who want to get news out to their target audience. Politicians have embraced it as a way of keeping supporters informed of what is going on. It is a quick way to find answers to questions if you and your colleagues stay connected to it. It may even have applications in the AEC community, but I haven't found many yet. If you know of any please let me know. If we do use these tools, just remember that it will reflect on you and the company you represent. With the speed that information travels at the click of a button, consider slowing down to think about what you are about to share with the world. Technology can get you in trouble really fast.

Blogs are a great way of sharing information too. People start blogs and just write on a regular basis (or

irregular basis) about a topic that is relevant to them. People can then comment publicly on the content. It is a great way to exchange ideas. Check out blog.csinet.org or one my favorite discussion sites discus.4specs.com/cgi-bin/discus/discus.cgi. CSI Chicago Chapter is also on Twitter and LinkedIn. There are others, many others so get out there and check them out.

The young whipper snappers are all up to speed in social media, now its time for us old timers.

I hope to see you soon,



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Greetings From the President....

February 2010

This is great; my second newsletter that didn't require me to look into a crystal ball and think two months ahead to write a president's letter. How do you like the new electronic version of the Change Order? We've received only a few comments; please share your thoughts, the good and the bad. Our goal is to make it the best and we can only do it with your help.

I don't know about you, but once again, I'm going crazy this winter. I've lived in Chicago all my life but will never get used to our winters. It's nice sometimes to hunker down at home, but I can only read so many issues of Construction Specifier! And there's nothing worse than a cyclist who can't get outside to ride and is relegated to the great indoors to keep my cycling form. Talk about watching paint dry, I believe indoor bike workouts are worse! The thing that saves me is doing my workouts with other cyclists. I participate in 3 indoor bike sweat fests a week and I'm so thankful to have others to share in the pain.

We have quite a few events coming up for the remainder of this winter and the upcoming spring season so grab a fellow CSI buddy and get out and enjoy some of our programs. The February Building Envelope Event on February 23 is now in its 7th year, and it always fills up quickly coming up quickly. Our three panelist are coming from across the country to present "Building Envelope and Moisture Problems from Three Perspectives"

The Membership Committee is working on a New Member Appreciation Celebration, more info forthcoming. Of course we have our ever popular Industry and Professional Roundtables, which are free to members. Guests are also welcome, subject to space.

Friendly reminder, just incase you missed the email; it's CSI National and Region Annual Election time. Electronic voting begins February 3rd and closes on March 3rd. Here's a link if you'd like more info: http://www.csinet.org/s_csi/sec.asp?TRACKID=&CID=2429&DID=15706 . Pretty cool, I can have links in my Presidents Letter. I encourage you to please voice your opinion and vote.

I hope to see you soon,



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Greetings From the President....



January 2010

I hope you were able to make the Holiday Party at Carnivale; wow, what a great time. We have one incredible group of people that really knows how to express their enthusiasm, i.e. knows how to party. I must admit, it's been a couple years since I've been to our holiday party and now I realize how much fun I missed out on! Plus, the chapter was able to use proceeds from the raffle to benefit the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

I encourage all of you who haven't participated in one of our special events to check one out; you won't regret it. Our 10-week CDT classes started in January. Talk about a deal, where else can you learn everything there is to know about project documentation from some Chicago's most well respected professional and industry experts for only \$45?

The upcoming February Building Envelope Program on February 23 presents different aspects to moisture problems within the building enclosure system. Our generous sponsors make it possible to bring three excellent speakers from across the country, and offer this program economically. Johns Manville, Andersen Windows, CertainTeed, BASF, Rex Electric, and Dupont Tyvek, we thank you!

Now, you members who like to partake in indoor athletic events keep an eye out for information on our upcoming New Member Appreciation Night.

This is our first electronic newsletter! Pretty cool.... My last letter explained the why and now it's your turn to let us know what you think. Please feel free to email me, our board members or Cathy with your thoughts.

Lastly, I'd like to thank all our Board and Committee members, our volunteers for all their hard work during the trying year of 2009 and cheers to 2010!

Thank you,

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Greetings From the President....



November - December 2009

Over the past few months, the Electronic Communications Committee has been working diligently to create the communication tools that will move the Chicago Chapter of CSI into the 21st century. Why change you ask? I will list the advantages we have identified in the following paragraph. However, it is important to understand, we are not changing just to say we changed. It would be very easy to just keep doing what we have done in the past; after all, we have produced an award-winning magazine that is informative and filled with information that membership desires on a monthly basis. But could we have a publication that could give us the more information in a timelier manner? Can we produce the publication in a more environmentally conscience method? Could we be a better resource for the membership as a whole? We think we can.

We looked at the different types of publications, including keeping the existing format. After reviewing the different types, one rose to the top. It is an electronic newsletter that is sent monthly by email, in a format that will mirror our website. It will have links back to the website, informational articles like we have always published, and, because we do not have to work with this format so far in advance, the information will be the timeliest.

The advantages of an electronic newsletter are:

- It is less expensive to produce and distribute. Once the format is designed (finalized), we plug in new information and send another blast to your mailing list.
- It will contain information that is more current than the Change Order due to the current paper publishing schedule requiring a 45-day leadtime.
- It is more environmentally-friendly as it does not require a printed copy to be read.
- The format can be read on computer, smart phone, or other electronic device that can receive email.
- It includes links that can be followed immediately. Chances are much better that the recipients will click through to our Web site from an e-newsletter than carry a print version to the computer and type in a URL.
- An archive of past issues will remain online for reference.
- It can be easily forwarded by the recipients, expanding the potential distribution far beyond your own contact list.
- A hard copy version can still be made available for those few members who do not have email or internet access.

While we are sometimes resistant to change, it is important for us to embrace the changes that are necessary to move our communication tools to a digital format. The cost savings to produce, the environmentally-friendly distribution, and easy-to-read format will help us keep our place among the elite chapters in the country.

P.S. Don't forget about our annual Holiday Party scheduled for Dec. 8th at Carnivale. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Happy Holidays!



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Greetings From the President....

October, 2009

It's the end of August, I'm enjoying a wonderful summer, but tonight I have to make believe its October and write my President's letter. Randy wasn't kidding; it can be tough at times to write newsletters over a month in advance. Ok, I have to make believe summer's over and its early fall; no more vacation time to take, days are shorter, kids are back in school, hopefully some projects have come our way, and many of us are scurrying to get those last few learning credits so we can keep our licenses. I just surfed over to CSI.org to learn more about the "On Demand Webinars" program but clicked one time too many and now am lost on website and am learning some other interesting things:

Did you know Masterformat 95 will no longer be supported after Dec. 2009? I guess it's time for all those firms who haven't made the jump to Masterformat 2004 to get moving.

Did you know that CSI is updating its Strategic Plan and it will be voted on this month? One interesting tidbit I picked up is that the average age of a typical CSI member is 52 years old! One of the drivers of the upcoming plan I'm sure will be recruitment of younger members to keep our organization going.

Did you know CSI National will have a new website in 2010 that will incorporate local chapter "micro-sites"? Pretty cool, can't wait to see it.

Did you know that both National and Chicago CSI Chapter have Linked-In Discussion Groups? I encourage you to sign up and let's get the dialogue going.

Last one I promise:

Do you know what CSI CEN is? It's a free service that provides CSI members with a 24/7 accessible tool that manages the history of education programs they've completed.

So next time you're at your desk surfing the web, check out all the good stuff on CSI.org.

Hey did you notice I didn't talk about biking in this letter!!

Sincerely,



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Greetings from the President

September 2009

For those who read my first president's letter, you now know I'm a cycling nut who has a goal of improving his hill climbing ability. Well, I tested myself in June by participating in the Horribly Hilly Hundreds ride, just a measly 67 mile ride with 6,000 feet of climbing, and grades up to 15%. No problem, yea sure.... The ride really was a test! Not just physical but also a mental one. I was tempted to quit on the last climb to the finish line; the ride organizers of course saved the worst hill for last. I almost stopped and walked if it hadn't been for the people along side the road cheering me on, encouraging me to finish, and not quit. Amazing how just a few words of encouragement helped.

Persevering is something all of us in the design and construction community are all trying to do in this economy. Many of us are now multi-tasking doing whatever it takes to keep our jobs. How about those who aren't as fortunate and have lost a job? It is tough out there and I encourage the Chicago CSI family to reach out and help a fellow professional or industry member. Shake a few trees for a friend; offer some words of encouragement.

The Strategic Planning meeting went well and the Board/ Committees are working on some exciting programs, roundtables and special educational events. We also formed an Electronic Communication Committee which will investigate website and newsletter options for the chapter. One immediate goal is to form a "LinkedIn" Group for the Chicago Chapter. This professional social networking site will provide a communication tool, helping Chapter members stay in touch, connect with members looking for some help, be it looking for employment, technical advice, or reaching out to members with a new product. Pretty cool stuff. Once the group is set up Cathy will get the word out.

The dates of CSI events for the year are printed on page 15. As of the newsletter deadline, many of the titles were being finalized, so watch the website, email and the monthly newsletter for updates. The popular professional and industry roundtables topics held at lunchtime are announced through email, so make sure to contact the chapter office if you have changed providers, or wish to be added to the update list.

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Greetings From the President....

August, 2009

Wow, was that an awards banquet or what? Everyone had a wonderful time honoring all who contributed to the success of our chapter this past year. The evening featured a celebration of Gary Betts and Ken Crocco's lives by Renee Doktorcyk and was followed by Joe Stypka and Kurt Moehlmann's honoring of Rick Levin's elevation to Fellowship. Kurt was the master moderator who kept the things going in his own playful way. Many thanks to our social committee members, Tabitha Ruiz, Kristin

Henriksen, Brian Watson and of course, Cathy, for all their hard work in making this another successful awards banquet.

I'd like to welcome my board, the Mike's (Michael Kipley and Michael DeRouin), Pete Kovacik, Lance Parker, Holly Hirsch, Fernando Araujo, Dan Smith, Tom Boissy, Deb Burkhart, Stuart Berger, Tabitha Ruiz, Pat Duffy, Nolan Day and Randy Chapple. I'm looking forward to working with you to make this successful year.

Summer is upon us and we're all thinking about how much fun we can cram into the next three months. I personally am looking forward to a long summer of cycling and hope to achieve my goals of doing a sub 5 hour century and improving my climbing skills. But, first things first – what are my goals for our chapter this upcoming year? I do have a few ideas to discuss with the board at our upcoming strategic planning meeting. I'll have an update in my next President's Letter. Yes, the chapter is taking a summer break, but the board will be planning throughout the summer, and there's always something that needs to be done. I encourage all our members to set aside some time to do some of your own Chicago CSI Chapter strategic planning and assess your involvement level for the upcoming year. Your plan might be to attend a few more meetings; pass along some roundtable ideas; volunteer to assist in one of our committees or possibly reach out to help members who may have recently lost a job. Please contact a board member, Cathy, or myself with your ideas. I look forward to working along side of you this upcoming year.

Don't forget our first Chapter Meeting is on September 22 at the Union League Club.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Birazzi". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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