



## **Specifications Consultants in Independent Practice**

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# *SCIPping Along*

**August 2006**

Sheryl Dodd-Hansen, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, MAI, SCIP

Editor

Welcome to Fiscal Year 2007 and the first of several *SCIPping Along* Newsletters that are intended to keep members informed about the activities of the organization during the year. In order to receive this newsletter, members need to keep their email address and other contact information up-to-date by informing Dave Metzger of any changes and by paying their dues on time. The deadline for payment of FY2007 dues in order to be included in the annual roster is **August 31, 2006**. sdh

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

**Dennis J. Hall, FAIA, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, LEED-AP, SCIP**

SCIP is off to a fast start for FY07 with the establishment of SCIP standing and ad hoc committees. The Board is holding monthly teleconferences to keep pace with the many activities of the organization. Our FY07 SCIP committees include Budget, Sponsorship, Annual Meeting, Newsletter, Specifications Competition, Policies, Bylaws, Incorporation, and Nominating. Each SCIP officer is responsible for overseeing a committee and will be including a brief summary of their committee actions in their officer reports.

As the liaison to the Policies Committee, under the leadership of Mark Kalin, FAIA, FCSI, I can report that this committee will create and assemble SCIP policies on a variety of subjects from reimbursement to sponsorships to administrative issues. The other committee members include Dane Dodd-Hansen, FCSI, AIA; Bruce Poulsen, CSI, CCS, AIA, and Margaret Chewing, FCSI, CCS. This committee is just being formed and no action has been taken yet, but they will be bringing a recommendation to the Board on the creation of official SCIP policies later this year.

SCIP is the moderator for several of the discussion forums on the CSI website, including the Specifications Discussion Forum. These forums will enable SCIP members to get factual information and have input on subjects including the new, proposed SectionFormat, PageFormat, UniFormat, US National CAD Standard, MasterFormat maintenance, and many other subjects, as well as exchange information among members. I encourage all SCIP members to participate in this great venue for the exchange of knowledge.

2007 will mark the 40th anniversary of independent specifiers gathering to discuss issues surrounding the practice of specifications consulting. Next June, in Baltimore, SCIP will again conduct our annual meeting at the CSI Convention and Show. Expect some special activities for this celebration of 40 years of SCIP.

A lot has changed over the last 40 years and SCIP needs to change with the times. The Board is dedicated to working hard to help drive business opportunities, education, and fellowship to our members. We are becoming more inclusive, creating working committees with both member and affiliate participation but still recognizing that we are an organization of independent specifications consultants with unique issues that distinguish us from firm specifiers.

Who needs SCIP? If you have more work than you can do, possess all construction, technical, and project delivery knowledge, have no desire to share your knowledge or improve the profession of preparing written construction documents, and don't need a network of highly skilled professionals you can rely on for assistance and support, you probably don't need SCIP. But for the rest of us, SCIP is an organization that is trying to make a difference and work for the good of our members and the profession.

Thank you for your support of your Board and please let us know how we may better serve you.

### **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Robert Johnson, RA, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, SCIP**

SCIP is considering the establishment of a specifications-related competition. One idea that has been proposed is to sponsor a competition among manufacturers to evaluate the conformance of manufacturer provided guide specifications and suggested details to comply with CSI formats and recommendations. This would include consideration for conformance with the Project Resource Manual, MasterFormat, SectionFormat, PageFormat, and the National CAD Standard. It could also evaluate the coordination of the guide specifications with the details in terms of coordination of terminology and distribution of information. The purpose of the competition would be to encourage the improvement in the quality of guide specifications and suggested details available from manufacturers.

Do you think this is a good idea? Do you have some ideas of how best to do it? Do you have some ideas on how to improve the concept? Do you have some other ideas for a specifications related competition? Your comments would be most welcome. We are also looking for some volunteers who would be interested in serving on a specifications competition committee. Please contact me at [RWJ@JandJConsultants.com](mailto:RWJ@JandJConsultants.com)

### **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**David Lorenzini, RA, FCSI, CCS, SCIP**

The SCIP Member Directory is now directly accessible from the home page, as a result of a poll taken at the annual meeting in Las Vegas. Plans are underway to convert the listing into a database format to allow more functionality.

New officers have taken office since the last report, and their names have been updated on the web site. We also have a photo taken at the Las Vegas planning meeting.

There have been several requests to "buy" ads on the SCIP web site. Current policy is to display firms who have sponsored our activities at the annual meeting and supported SCIP in special events. A study of an overall sponsorship policy may change this approach.

Ralph Liebing continues to submit articles of unique interest to specifiers. Five articles were submitted in June 2006 alone. Two more for August have just been added.

Help is still needed to fill some of the empty pages planned for the redesigned web site. If you have any ideas for making it more useful, send your comments to [webmaster@scip.com](mailto:webmaster@scip.com).

**TREASURER’S REPORT & MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

**David Metzger, FAIA, FCSI, CDT, SCIP**

Membership renewal forms were mailed in late May. To date I have received about 160 renewals, so there are still 50 or so SCIP members who have not yet renewed. If you have not yet done so, please return your forms and check as soon as possible. Members who have not renewed by September 1 will have to be removed from the SCIP roster, and their names will not be sent to McGraw-Hill to receive Sweets catalogs free of charge.

The SCIP budget for the 2006 – 2007 fiscal year was approved by the Board during their June conference call. The budget and its underlying assumptions follows:

As of June 16, 2006

	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>Starting Balance</b>			<b>7,350</b>
<b>Revenue</b>			
A. Dues	10,500		
B. Interest Income	10		
C. Sponsorship Funds	5,500		
D. Meeting Registrations	1,000		
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>17,010</b>		<b>24,360</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
E. Exhibit Space at AIA Convention - 2007		4,600	

F. Exhibit Space at CSI Convention - Baltimore		1,000	
G. Meeting expenses		1,000	
H. Supplies		500	
I. Telephone		1000	
J. Website		3,000	
K. Travel		3,000	
L. Attorney		4,450	
M. Registered Agent/Filing Fee		530	
N. Accountant/Audit		1,000	
O. Discretionary		500	
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>20,580</b>	<b>20,580</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>3,780</b>

**Budgeting Assumptions**

- A. Dues: 210 members @ \$50.00 each.
- B. Interest on SCIP checking account
- C. Board policies for soliciting and spending sponsorship funds need to be developed.
- D. Meeting Registrations: 40 members @ \$25.00 each for lunch at SCIP annual meeting; financial commitment to discourage no-shows; remainder of cost covered by sponsors.
- E. AIA Booth: smallest 10 x 10 @ \$36.00 per sq. ft.; \$1,000.00 for expenses.
- F. Booth comped by CSI; \$1,000.00 for expenses.
- G. Dinners for Board members at Board meetings.
- H. Printing, postage, envelopes, etc. for membership renewals and other mailings.
- I. No phone service maintained; conference calls through a teleconferencing service.
- J. Includes \$2,500.00 for database conversion, and \$500.00 for annual payments to website host. Although the \$2,500.00 is a one time expense, not annual, there likely will be similar annual expenses in the future, and this amount may fluctuate in future budgets.
- K. Maximum \$500.00 reimbursement for each authorized SCIP representative at an event such as AIA Convention or National Specifiers Conference that the person would not otherwise attend.
- L. Balance of amount owed incorporation attorney (\$5,000.00 total plus \$700.00 filing fee to DC, less \$1,250.00 paid). **This is a one time expense, not annual.**

- M. Attorney's \$280.00 fee for to be SCIP's registered agent in DC, plus \$250.00 filing fee for domestic business corporation. **Payable every 2 years.**
- N. Accountant's fee to audit SCIP books
- O. President's discretionary fund for flowers, cards, etc.

**Note that ending balance must be minimum \$3,500.00 to avoid bank fees.**

## **IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**John Regener, AIA, CSI, CCS, CCCA, SCIP**

SCIP is loaded with tradition. One of those cherished traditions is arguing. We have decades of tradition where we have argued in our annual roundtable discussions over whether to have a policy toward non-members described as an "open door," "closed door," "look over the transom" or other such metaphor. It is a matter of whether SCIP shall be an exclusive or inclusive organization.

I appreciate the concern and probably come down more on the side that says "SCIP should be for spec consultants and not for in-house specifiers." Then I think about my own history, take a deep breath and say, "There must be a way to accommodate the diversity within the ranks of "consultants" and there must be a way to make it easy to transition from "in-house" to "out-sourced" (consultant) specifier." Also, in-house specifiers have things to contribute to the well-being of all specifiers.

Dealing with diversity is difficult. Some SCIP members fit the mold of the prototypical specification consultant who spends nearly all chargeable time preparing Project Manuals with a full range of bidding and contract requirements and multiple divisions of Specifications. Many do not neatly fit the mold. They spend some of their time providing architectural and engineering services. Some perform quality assurance checks on drawings and specifications. Some perform construction contract administration services. Some prepare specifications and other product information for building product manufacturers. Some even provide litigation support services and provide expert witness testimony. We'd better not look too closely or we will find many long-time members who do not spend 51 percent of their time preparing project-specific construction specifications.

What shall SCIP do with this diversity? We have tried to quantify and describe in detail the qualifications to be a SCIP member ("maintains a building product library", "has a business telephone number," and "writes Division 1 specification sections."). When we get specific, we find many, many exceptions. Arguments break out and we never seem to resolve the disputes. So, it has been SCIP's tradition to ignore the matter. Unfortunately, that doesn't work anymore.

SCIP has grown and has prominence not only within CSI but in the overall construction industry. SCIP is responding to this "grown-up" by getting officially organized as a corporation, with all the legal and financial responsibilities and obligations that go along with that. SCIP's current Board (that includes me still) has doubled the dues that had been \$25 since the 1970's in response to new financial obligations. The Board is now working with a budget and has made commitments that take money to fulfill, such as the booth at the annual CSI Show & Convention. The Board is moving ahead and is

spending money to develop the SCIP website into a more substantial means for prospective clients to identify SCIP specifiers. It ain't like the good ol' days when we just got together once a year for chitchat and chow. SCIP is getting more and more active throughout the whole year. Who knows, maybe SCIP will do something crazy like sponsor a NASCAR race team (just kidding!).

Policies are being developed to address how SCIP relates to sponsors. Tough discussions will be had in the next year. Input from SCIP members is not only welcome but is necessary. Committees will address these matters and all SCIP members may serve on them. Just let the President or committee chair know of your interest.

On the matter of who may belong to SCIP, I favor of SCIP being an open organization. That's why I advocated the SCIP bylaws being changed to make a category called "SCIP Affiliate." It is a status for those who want to be involved with SCIP but who do not meet the qualifications to be a SCIP Member. It makes the transition from "in-house" to "out-sourced" specifier easier. It suits what is happening more frequently: today's in-house specifier is tomorrow's out-sourced specifier. It is like the old Corresponding Member that I and many others used before we became legitimate, independent specifiers.

I think there are some traditions and values in SCIP that should be grasped and defended vigorously. Others should be rejected. I think solving CSI's problems is not what SCIP should be spending its resources on. I think being an alliance partner with CSI (and Construction Specifications Canada and other industry associations) is something SCIP should do. The key to all these new involvements and programs is to understand how they relate to our everyday activities. As one SCIP member persistently reminded me, "What does this have to do with my business?" So, I suggest that we consider three things and support new endeavors when they result in affirmative responses to the following:

- Does it make my work easier or more fulfilling?
- Does it make me more productive? (\$\$\$)
- Does it make me more competent?

If you agree or disagree, let the SCIP Board know.

## **BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Michael D. Chambers, FAIA, FCSI, CCS, SCIP**

As any professional association grows and matures its articles of governance must be updated. An Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Robert Johnson FCSI AIA CCS SCIP, Nina Giglio CSI CCS Assoc. AIA and I were tasked to update the By-laws and bring them into accord with SCIP's new Articles of Incorporation. Bob and Nina did a great job on really digging into the text and getting it in line with by-laws of similar associations. We also reviewed Robert's Rules of Order and made changes as appropriate.

The three major areas of change are in membership categories, composition of the Board, and coordinating with the Articles of Incorporation. We were able to streamline them a bit and removed some duplications and unclear text. In the main, the updated By-laws are a significant improvement and should enable the Board to deal more effectively with issues of governance as they arise.

Again, many thanks to Bob and Nina for their excellence work. A special thanks to Past-President and Member of the American Institute of Parliamentarians Sheryl Dodd-Hansen FSCI CCS SCIP for her insightful review comments and clarifications on procedural issues. The membership will be receiving a copy of the By-laws for review and ratification in the near future.

## **INTERESTING ARTICLES:**

### **NOTES FROM A SPEC INTERN**

**by Stefan Kalin, Student, Ohio State University School of Architecture**

I'm a student at OSU and an intern at NBBJ in Columbus, working in the spec department under Don Kruckeberg CCS and Kent Usher CCS. Perhaps you'd be interested in what the view is from down here....

Occasionally I catch a glimpse of fear in the faces of the people I tell about my internship at school. "You mean there are architects who just do paperwork?!?! What if I get stuck with THAT job." When I try to explain to my "studio-mates" at OSU's Knowlton School of Architecture what it is that my internship at NBBJ consists of, they are often confused. Many of my fellow students (a few well into the third year of the program) have no conception of architecture outside of aesthetic design, head in the sand, programming algorithms into various software platforms to create surfaces so elaborately curved that the computer inevitably crashes.

I spend my days writing individual spec sections, researching products, updating hard copies of drawings and specs for our conversion to Masterformat 2004, and streamlining and proofreading the formatting of the NBBJ master specifications. The firm makes sure I get to educational sessions on contracts, products, and practices, and shares their vision of architecture constantly. This supplements the knowledge I have gained about the pulse of the industry from attending a few "green" conferences, allowing me to avoid common misconceptions about how to achieve high quality, "green," not just looking for ways to get points. I think that the new ways in which the industry is trying to regulate and measure itself is promising, but much work is still needed.

I am in awe at the dedication and long hours the people in the spec department put in. From what I have gathered though, specs are almost in the same realm as the other busy work in office that gets passed off to interns. In fact, before I began at NBBJ, even the interns were above specs, with their award winning portfolio's aspirations to design. In reality, a reverse approach must be taken to have a project be successful from start to finish.



Lots of people question my desire to learn about writing specs. "Once you figure out what it is, you won't want to do it." But my goal is not to be in an office writing "fake specs." My work with specs lets me challenge myself and also allows me to develop an ability to communicate in a professional, amicable manner. I aspire to be an expert, a knowledge manager, and office resource. Coupled with the merits of influencing industry to be green-minded the work is more rewarding than it is made out to be. I mean, in what other profession can one be part of a movement that has the potential to shave entire percentage points off of the energy consumption in the US and abroad.

Of course this is the glorified version. Others architects get to see themselves/are viewed by others as artistic visionaries, makers of profound shapes and spaces, masters of the three dimensional digital realm. What's my point? That more young architects need to understand that the spec speaks for the architect/firm when they are not there, in the field.

Any other spec interns out there I can network with? Any advice from SCIP members? Email me at [kalin.3@osu.edu](mailto:kalin.3@osu.edu)

## **SUSTAINABLE WOOD UPDATE**

**by Lisa J. Goodwin Robbins, RA, CCS, LEED AP, Kalin Associates Inc.**

Here's the story:

1. News, December 2005: Agrifiber Board is no longer available. Dow Bioproducts closed their Woodstalk plant in Manitoba. Dow BioProducts decided the product wasn't viable. Increased cost of oil/gas and MDI caused boards to cost too much.
2. News, January 2006: Primeboard was bought by Masonite International. A 75% minimum of Primeboard's product will go to Masonite for the production of low density core doors.
3. This week I contacted casework manufacturers, Case Systems and LSI, because in 2003 they both changed over to agrifiber board cores. Neither company can get it anymore. Both have switched to SkyBlend by Roseberg Forest Products (UF-free, 100% recycled content particleboard).
4. This week I also contacted Panel Source International, who has advertised agrifiber boards. They don't have it anymore either. They claim to be working with a Californian manufacturer, who will be producing a UF-free, rice straw MDF, possibly available in early 2008. Panel Source International does have a new product, PureKor Platinum MDF, the first that is both UF-free (using phenol formaldehyde) and FSC, available to market mid August 2006. PSI manufacturers only in the Northwest USA and Alberta, Canada.
5. News, June 2006: Columbia Forest Products is in the process of converting all its standard hardwood plywood production to produce formaldehyde-free panels, cost-competitive with standard urea-formaldehyde (UF) made plywood, using a proprietary soy-based resin adhesives (87% soy protein and 13% proprietary polymer, a water-based a petrochemical-based polyamide resin supplied by Hercules). Short-form spec: Plywood, Hardwood Veneer: Provide Purebond, by Columbia Forest Products. Portland, OR 97201; telephone 800-547-4261; [www.cfpwood.com](http://www.cfpwood.com). [Local manufacturing location for hardwood veneer in



- northeast is Newport, VT and Presque Isle, ME, and hardwood plywood is St. Casimir, QC, Canada.]
6. FSC vs. SFI sustainable forest programs: To ensure forests are protected, the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) developed the SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative) program to document the commitment of their members and the program's licensees keep our forests healthy and practice the highest level of sustainable forestry. [www.aboutsfi.org] SFI is not accepted by LEED, but may make some clients happy who want to be green without being LEED. Weyerhaeuser has become the first company to offer products meeting the new SFI chain of custody standard.
  7. There is a move afoot to allow SFI into LEED, possibly as a second class citizen. Alex Wilson has written a white paper on this topic, dated May 2006. He writes, "It is recommended that MRc7 be modified to establish criteria for "Tier 2" certification systems that satisfy the intent of LEED MRc7, while not changing the actual requirements of MRc7 at this time. The argument is that other certification systems could be developed that are equivalent to FSC.

Respond to: [lisa@kalinassociates.com](mailto:lisa@kalinassociates.com)

### **MASTERFORMAT 2004 UPDATE by Mark Kalin, FAIA, FCSI**

In 2005 we helped convince the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management to use Masterformat 2004 numbering for the \$300M of projects they do annually. We're on our second update of the DCAM Master Specifications, with good participation from architects and engineers doing state projects. We don't really spend any time talking about the numbering - as its the content of the spec that's of value - three equals for all products, LEED silver level language, state accessibility guidelines incorporated, no more arguments about which trade does what.

For private work it's a different story. We've had to convert 2 project manuals back to 5-digits when the engineers refused to update and even issued another project with Divisions 1-14 with 6-digits and Divisions 15-16 in 5-digit format. Locally only a small handful of firms have converted.

I guess that should be of no surprise since at a recent seminar on Specs for Small Projects with 110 people attending, only 3 were CSI members. At a local in-house seminar for 20 people at a large architectural firm, only 2 knew what the initials CSI meant. Skip the jokes about CSI standing for Crime Scene Investigation.

What's been your experience with Masterformat 2004? Please email me and I'll compile the responses and publish them in the next SCIPping Along. Respond to [mkalin@kalinassociates.com](mailto:mkalin@kalinassociates.com)

## STUDENT COMPETITION – CSI SHOW 2007

by David Metzger FAIA, FCSI, CDT

I am serving as treasurer for the Middle Atlantic Region's Student Competition Committee, for the 2007 CSI Show. The Region's Academic Affairs chair, and chair for the student Competition, is SCIP member Margaret Chewning FCSI CCS CCA, and SCIP Affiliate Mitch Miller AIA CSI CCS is heading the fund-raising efforts for the event.

We need your support! The Middle Atlantic Region will be continuing a great tradition started by the South East Region in Atlanta 2000. With the return of the Convention to the June time frame, we are anticipating the participation of our many Student Members at the CSI Show and Convention at Baltimore in 2007 and we want to have their first experience of the CSI Show to be a great one.

We have student events in planning to include a Pizza Social to get to know one another and network to discuss the coming week, a possible job site tour within walking distance of the convention center, and a Student Competition being planned in conjunction with the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity Chapter. The Competition is special this year, as it will provide the students an opportunity to show off skills they have been learning in school, and will (we hope) benefit a real family on the Gulf Coast.

Although the Middle Atlantic is putting the planning together on a local level, we are looking for people for the following:

- Participants and partners from across CSI nationally to provide the hands, guidance and financial assistance we need to pull this together by next summer.
- CSI Mentors willing to take a student or group of students under their wing to provide advice on where to be and when, and how to get the most out of their first convention experience.
- Those folks up for a challenge that would be willing to advise a team on their competition project or to be on the competition Jury to evaluate the solutions the student teams come up with and determine the winning design.

We are also in need of financial support from large and small groups or individuals. The funds raised will be used for expenses to put the Student Events together, scholarship prizes for the winning designs and funding toward the construction of the winning design under the direction of the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity Chapter.

A frequent topic of discussion on the 4specs website and at our SCIP meetings is "where will future specifiers come from?" The answer is that they will come from current students. We are convinced that the effort CSI is making with our Student Members, their Student Affiliates and schools will pay off in the long run with an increased appreciation of the value of strong construction documents, even if most of the students don't become specifiers themselves. That is the best reason to support the Student Events and Competition at the CSI Show. It is to the benefit of our industry to support this event and encourage students to attend

For more information on the Student Events through the years and how you can help go to <http://www.midatlanticcsi.org/comms/acadaff/SEC07.htm>.

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