



SCIPping Along

March 2006

Kerin (Dane) and Sheryl Dodd-Hansen, Editors

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MESSAGES FROM THE SCIP PRESIDENT

ANNUAL SCIP MEETING

SCIP's Annual Meeting is about to occur. For planning purposes, reservations are needed for the breakfast, lunch and afternoon discussion forum. Please **immediately** notify Linda M. Stansen, CSI, CCS, RA, SCIP at stanspecs@comcast.net to make reservations. Note: The ARKEMA (Kynar 500) sponsored dinner and entertainment is by separate reservation, as noted below.

The annual SCIP Business Meeting is scheduled for 9:00am on Tuesday March 28, 2006. It will be preceded by a continental breakfast bar and registration. The meeting will be held at the **MGM Grand Hotel, Conference Center, Room 319**, in Las Vegas, NV.

Following the business meeting, we will move into the traditional SCIP Roundtable Discussion, during which we have the opportunity to discuss matters of interest and concern for SCIP Members. The topics will be relevant to the practice of construction specifications writing as an independent consultant or "out-sourced" specifier. Topics will include the business of being an independent specifications writer.

We will break for lunch at 12:15pm and reconvene next door in **Room 320** for a hosted lunch buffet. Our generous host will be Omega Building Products. All specifiers --- "out-sourced" and in-house are invited to attend. Bill Buchholz, AIA, CCS, LEED AP will do a presentation on the state of Sustainable Design and issues related to "Green" specifying. Bill is finding that his practice is being significantly affected by Sustainable Design considerations, in both positive and negative ways.

At 2:00pm, we will reconvene in **Room 319** for an afternoon of discussions at the "Specifiers Forum hosted by SCIP." All specifiers are invited to attend and the roundtable

discussions will address many issues faced by “out-sourced” (independent) and in-house specifiers. Topics will range from experiences implementing Masterformat 2004 to managing specifications production to our favorite sharing of “Tips & Tricks”.

This will conclude the “SCIP Meeting” but it does not end the activities.

KYNAR 500 EVENT

Arkema Group, manufacturer of Kynar 500 resins, will again host us for dinner and entertainment, beginning with cocktails at 6:00pm, dinner at 7:00pm and entertainment at 8:30pm. As separate invitation with RSVP has been sent to SCIP Members and affiliates directly by Arkema. For those arriving in Las Vegas, this activity will be an excellent opportunity to reacquaint with colleagues. Accompanying guests are welcome. Immediate telephone response to Arkema is necessary. Contact **Patricia Simon, Public Affairs, Arkema Inc., 215/419-7346** or patricia.simon@arkemagroup.com.

MORE THAN SWEET S CATALOGS

One of the benefits of membership in SCIP is the annual complementary set of Sweet’s catalogs from McGraw-Hill/Sweet’s. For some SCIP Members, this is the sole reason for membership. Just do the math.

But SCIP membership is more than a free subscription to Sweet’s. It is the opportunity to have collegial relationships with other specifications consultants --- to know and be known. That is the primary benefit I have found for SCIP membership. I know many colleagues and I know that I can call them for advice, for example specifications and for opportunities to vent when the frustrations build up. Many SCIP members work as sole practitioners and is very valuable to be able to overcome the isolation with an email or telephone call to a trusted colleague.

How are trusted relationships achieved? They are achieved by knowing and being known. That is why it is important to attend the annual SCIP meeting and the occasional regional gatherings of specifications writers hosted by SCIP. One of the positive characteristics of SCIP members, speaking in generalities, has been acceptance of colleagues. Despite the fact that we often compete for clients, SCIP members generously share information and make referrals to other SCIP members. A common pattern is for someone to begin a specifications consulting practice and find that the initial clientele comes from referrals from other SCIP members.

We are continuing to build on this sharing of information. With the maturing of the Internet, our website (www.scip.com) has the potential to better serve SCIP Members through two pending initiatives. One is upgrading of the Roster so that prospective clients can more easily locate Members offering the services they seek, in the geographic region where the client or project is located. Another is an archive of unique or special specifications. But we are far from meeting Member expectations in both of these.

To develop Member information and resources, two things are needed: involvement by SCIP Members to make it happen and financial resources to pay for it. Oooo. Here comes the pitch for raising the dues. Yep. The dues haven't changed since the 1970s. That \$25 in 1970s dollars is paltry in 2006 dollars.

SCIP has subsisted on contributions from a few sponsors. And we will continue to develop sponsorships. The SCIP Board is developing a coherent and ethical policy regarding soliciting and accepting sponsor's contributions. SCIP is not for sale but we need financial resources beyond what the SCIP membership is willing to pay in dues. Those Sweet's catalogs aren't as valuable as they once were.

In order to properly receive contributions and to properly enter into business contracts for such things as the website development and operation, SCIP needs to grow up and be a not-for-profit corporation. And we are in that process.

It is a change for SCIP to go from a laissez-faire, unincorporated confederation of highly independent specifiers to a real organization. But in today's business climate, we must change.

To have input into the process of change --- rather than to be complacent and after the fact complain --- SCIP Members should attend the annual meeting, become informed and act in the Business Meeting to influence the process. Please attend the annual Business Meeting and other activities in Las Vegas on Tuesday March 28, 2006. It will be beneficial to individual members and to SCIP as an organization to have a well-attended meeting.

CSI AND SCIP

CSI and SCIP now have a formal Alliance Partnership and another alliance is pending with Constructions Specifications Canada (CSC). The obligations of these alliances are mutually beneficial and relatively simple. The focus of the CSI Alliance Partnership is on the annual CSI Show & Convention, where SCIP endorses and participates in the Show's education programs and CSI provides meeting space and a booth on the exhibit floor for SCIP.

That's the extent of the CSI Alliance Partnership except for an expectation that SCIP will form the nucleus of a body representing the general interests of all construction specifications writers. No specific commitments are attached to this general expectation. The CSI Alliance Partnership has a sunset clause that the partnership will cease in three years. The CSI Alliance Partnership commits to a formal agreement what have been informal commitments for several years.

SCIP members are very influential in CSI activities from Chapter to Institute levels. CSI has not tried to limit or direct SCIP's activities. If anything, SCIP has much, much more influence on CSI than CSI on SCIP. For example, SCIP members have been on both pro and con sides of matters such as MasterFormat 2004. SCIP members are leading the SectionFormat/PageFormat Update Task Team (SPUTT) and other CSI initiatives. But SCIP's Board has taken no stand on CSI governance and program matters. In fact, this

past year SCIP asserted its independence by sponsoring a National Specifiers Conference, to the consternation of some CSI leaders.

While in Las Vegas for the annual SCIP Meeting and the CSI Show & Convention, there will be much energy expended over the controversies of CSI's Institute-level personnel changes, alliances with business interests, finances and formats. It needs to be kept clear what is CSI and what is SCIP. It may be difficult to differentiate between what is a CSI matter and what is a SCIP matter, since our business of producing construction specifications is affected by what CSI does, but we must keep the distinctions clear.

This is not intended to discourage or hinder investigation, assessment and action by SCIP members regarding changes at the CSI Institute level. But SCIP members should do so as CSI members and use the organizational mechanisms of CSI. SCIP has too many other urgent issues that need attention to get caught up in CSI matters. When and if facts come out into the light, and after SCIP gets its corporate house in order, then SCIP as an organization representing a core constituency of CSI may speak and act in the best interests of specifiers.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

There will be two opportunities for the "Roundtable" discussions that SCIP is well-known for. On Tuesday morning, March 28, after the Annual Business Meeting, there will be discussion of matters of unique concern for SCIP Members. That is, the topics will pertain to the business of being a specifications consultant. In the afternoon on Tuesday March 28, there will be a "Specifiers Forum hosted by SCIP." The afternoon session will be on topics of general interest and concern for all specifications writers. The afternoon session is open for SCIP Members, Affiliates and any specifiers interested in participating.

Suggested topics may be submitted prior to the meeting (recommended) or on the day of the meeting. Send suggestions to SCIP President, John Regener, AIA, CCS, CCCA, CSI, SCIP by Friday March 24, 2006 (regener@cox.net).

SCIP BOOTH

SCIP will have a booth again this year of the CSI Show. Make it your first stop in the show and sign up for session meeting and greeting those interested in SCIP. This has been an enjoyable experience for many who have volunteered their time in past years. The sign-up sheet will be at the SCIP meetings on Tuesday March 28 and in the booth during show hours.

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