

THE THANKLESS TASK

by Ralph Liebing, RA, CSI
Cincinnati, OH

Well, the deadline was met! Whew!!

We, one more time, muddled through a change in the headers at the last minute; convincing the Owner and our bosses that we should use the 2007 AIA contract documents, forestalled some redundant drawing notes that also conflicted with the specs; and managed to keep relative peace with interiors and MEP (refereeing format and information location).

All that and getting the hefty array of general trade Sections out the door too. Oh, yes, and we went to a three-volume format because of the "heft".

So what?

We did our job--I guess as expected and anticipated, even with all the glitches and innumerable changes and "situations" thrown our way. Another mark in Heaven! (and yes, most all spec writers DO go there!!!). Overlooked, yet maligned; taken for granted yet let one itty-bitty thing go wrong; and.....; flexible to the whims, after-thoughts, pet peeves, misunderstanding, resistance and nuances of others, yet perceived as strident, stubborn, cantankerous and old-fashioned, we got our work on the job out the door. There is a sense of self-satisfaction (not gloat) because we did a good job, but have you also noticed the tremendous quiet around your cube (office)?

"Routine", I guess is one word we could use. "As usual" a good enduring phrase!

But within the let-down and relief in other quarters (among our fellow staffers doing other than specs) there is a mild celebration of sorts--perhaps relief manifested in giddiness, momentary relaxation and blatant tom-foolery. In the "specs cube", quiet but not peace; satisfaction but not relaxation; on to the tail-end of the project (yes, that opposite, but involving the "front-end", like bidding docs, invitation to bid, etc.

Well, nonetheless, we'll turn out the lights when we leave--oh, and we'll sweep the floor first thing when we get in at 6:35AM tomorrow morning--to meet tomorrow's deadline!

A thankless task--but damn it, we love it and look forward to coming back the next day for the next project.

Are we ultimate professionals, stupid, desperate--or just plain silly?