

The Southern Fried Architect

(A clear, complete, concise, and mostly correct, view of stuff happening in the design/construction industry)

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SFA Wins Publication Commendation

Your favorite online publication of stuff happening in the design/construction industry, “*The Southern Fried Architect*”, for those of you who needed a clue, was a winner of a Publication Commendation from the Construction Specifications Institute for continuous publications at this year’s National Convention. It’s hard to believe that little ‘ole us was selected for this honor from all the other online rags out there.

NCS Web Site Updated

The National CAD Standard Project Committee has revised its web site with lots of new features including:

- Press Releases
- List of NCS Adopters
- Implementation Tips
- Sample Pages
- Sample NCS PowerPoint Presentation (Updated)

Go to www.nationalcadstandard.org and check it out.

OmniClass Version 1.0 Still to be Published

Okay, I lied to you last month, but the latest absolutely, positively, maybe date for publication of *OmniClass* Version 1.0 is now September 1, or thereabouts. Go to www.omniclass.org for more info.

SCIP - CSI Strategic Alliance Approved

The Board of Directors for the Specification Consultants in Independent Practice (SCIP) has approved a strategic alliance with the Construction Specifications Institute. I expect SCIP to soon begin discussions with other professional and industry organizations, and to enter into similar agreements in an effort to bring all specification professionals together under one organization. For more information on joining SCIP, go to www.scip.com. For \$25 bucks a year, this is the best deal in the industry.

Construction Specifications Academy to Take Place This October in San Francisco

The Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) has scheduled its first Construction Specifications Academy in sunny California on October 12-14, co-located with both the Product Representative and Contract Administration Academies. With SCIP members taking lead roles in the educational sessions, this is aimed at passing on years of knowledge in the production of written construction documents and the future of the profession. For more information or to register, go to www.csinet.org.

Sticks + Stones

SFA - Section B

Welcome to another issue of *Sticks + Stones*, where we provide marginally professional advice to our readers based on our many years of creating and observing problems in the construction industry. In our diligent pursuit to ensure that our readers are knowledgeable about all that design and construction stuff, this month we will highlight a few of the changes to *MasterFormat* and subjects you may want to include in your next project manual.

01 35 23 – Owner Safety Requirements



Owners sometimes have their own special safety requirements. In order to accommodate this need, *MasterFormat 2004* has a brand new number and title for owner required safety requirements.

I think these boys need to be committed, but instead will probably soon be admitted.

08 44 00 – Curtain Walls and Glazed Assemblies



MasterFormat 2004, the new expanded organization structure for work results, has relocated entrances, storefronts, and curtain walls together in Division 08 - Openings. Making the structure more logical was just one of the goals of the *MasterFormat* Expansion Task Team as we looked at the old 1995 edition.

But just because we wanted our structure to look more logical is no reason for you to do the same with your structures.

26 01 50 – Operation and Maintenance of Lighting



MasterFormat 2004 has added a location to specify operation and maintenance work in every division. Here we see the opportunity to specify the repair of a light pole that has fallen down. I always hate it when this happens on one of my projects, but now I have a location to specify the repair. Maybe someone should have specified the reinforcing for the concrete base in the first place.

13 11 46 – Swimming Pool Accessories



Division 13 has been revamped and has a new location for Special Facility Components including all kinds of pool and fountain stuff. When we first got this photo we thought it was wave-generating equipment but soon realized it was probably just swimming pool accessories for some of the rich kids.

Your mother always told you never go into the water within 30 minutes after eating. The same holds true after drinking a case of beer as well. This is particularly true if you are driving at the time.

32 12 16 – Asphalt Paving



All the “site stuff” now has new numbers and locations in *MasterFormat*.

According to the warning label on the bottle of allergy meds, one should never operate heavy machinery while taking this stuff. If you get sleepy, you should just pull over and take a short “power-nap.” That is what I do.

I am sure that OSHA also has plenty of other good regulations like not practicing for the X-Games while using certain equipment.

Technically Speaking

SFA - Section C

Tar and Feathering: On the Road for a better *MasterFormat*

With the creation of the *MasterFormat* Accredited Instructor program and the fact that I am old and tired, we are cutting way back on our personal *MasterFormat* speaking schedule. Below is my current schedule for *MasterFormat* speaking for the rest of the year.

<i>September 13, 2005</i>	CSI Madison	Madison, WI
<i>September 22, 2005</i>	CSI Sun Coast	Sarasota, FL
<i>October 17, 2005</i>	SMACNA	Palm Springs, CA
<i>November 9, 2005</i>	FCIA Conference	San Diego, CA

AIA Documents

As announced in the July edition of *SFA*, we are still planning to post many of the AIA documents in pdf format with the *MasterFormat 2004* modification for review and comment. As soon as we get our web site updated, all you will need to do is to go to <http://www.hallarch.com>, click on the “collaboration” button at the top of the page, and then go to the “public” area to find the documents.

Proposed Standard Form of Agreement Posted

We have also included on our web site a new proposed “Standard Form of Agreement between Architect and Consultant for Specification Services,” based upon AIA Documents C727, *Standard Form of Agreement between Architect and Consultant for Special Services*. This standard agreement form has been submitted to the Specification Consultants in Independent Practice (SCIP) for their endorsement prior to being proposed to the AIA Documents Committee. Comments are welcome.

Other Neat Web Site Stuff

Our web site revision will also include a “collaboration” section where you will be able to download *MasterFormat 2004 Edition* PowerPoint presentations free of charge. We plan to put other really neat stuff up there for sharing and collaboration, like copies of our articles, editorials, and writings that we get lots of requests for, so feel free to drop in any time, and rest assured that we will alert you here when we post cool stuff.

All of this should be up and running some time in September, so stay tuned.

Other Stuff

SFA - Section D

Below is a copy of an article we received from our ole friend R. LouAnn Fornataro, FCSI from New Hampshire. LouAnn thought that we would appreciate the wisdom of the writer and we thought we would share it with you.

Dam Letter!

This is an actual letter sent to a man named Ryan DeVries by Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, State of Michigan. This guy's response is hilarious, but read the State's letter before you get to the response letter.

SUBJECT: DEQ File No. 97-59-0023-1 T11N, Sec. 20 Montcalm County

Dear Mr. DeVries:

It has come to the attention of the Department of Environment Quality that there has been recent unauthorized activity on the above referenced parcel of property. You have been certified as the legal landowner and/or contractor who did the following unauthorized activity:

Construction and maintenance of two wood debris dams across the outlet stream of Spring Pond.

A permit must be issued prior to the start of this type of activity. A review of the Department's files shows that no permits have been issued. Therefore, the Department has determined that this activity is in violation of Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.30101 to 324.30113 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, annotated.

The Department has been informed that one or both of the dams partially failed during a recent rain event, causing debris dams and flooding at downstream locations. We find that dams of this nature are inherently hazardous and cannot be permitted. The Department therefore orders you to cease and desist all unauthorized activities at this location, and to restore the stream to a free-flow condition by removing and wood and brush forming the dam from the stream channel. All restoration work shall be completed no later than January 31, 1998.

Please notify this office when the restoration has been completed so that a follow-up site inspection may be scheduled by our staff. Failure to comply with this request or any further unauthorized activity on the site may result in this case being referred for elevated enforcement action.

We anticipate and would appreciate your full cooperation in this matter. Please feel free to contact me at this office, if you have any questions.

*Sincerely,
David L. Price,
District Representative
Land and Water Management Division*

Here is the actual response sent back by Mr. DeVries:

Re: DEQ File No. 97-59-0023-1 T11N, Sec. 20 Montcalm County

Dear Mr. Price:

Your certified letter dated 12/17/97 has been handed to me to respond to.

I am the legal landowner but not the Contractor at 2088 Dagget, Pierson, Michigan. A couple of beavers are in the (State unauthorized) process of constructing and maintaining two wood "debris" dams across the outlet stream of my Spring Pond. While I did not pay for, authorize, nor supervise their dam project, I think they would be highly offended that you call their skilled use of nature's building materials "debris." I would like to challenge your department to attempt to emulate their dam project any dam time and/or any dam place you choose. I believe I can safely state there is no way you could ever match their dam skills, their dam

resourcefulness, their dam ingenuity, their dam persistence, their dam determination and/or their dam work ethic.

As to your request, I do not think the beavers are aware that they must first fill out a dam permit prior to the start of this type of dam activity. My first dam question to you is: Are you trying to discriminate against my Spring Pond Beavers, or do you require all beavers throughout this State to conform to said request?

If you are not discriminating against these particular beavers, through the Freedom of Information Act, I request completed copies of all those other applicable beaver dam permits that have been issued. Perhaps we will see if there really is a dam violation of Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.30101 to 324.30113 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, annotated.

I have several concerns. My first concern is: aren't the beavers entitled to legal representation? The Spring Pond Beavers are financially destitute and are unable to pay for said representation-the State will have to provide them with a dam lawyer. The Department's dam concern that either one or both of the dams failed during a recent rain event, causing flooding, is proof that this is a natural occurrence, which the Department is required to protect. In other words, we should leave the Spring Pond Beavers alone rather than harassing them and calling their dam names.

If you want the stream "restored" to a dam free-flow condition please contact the beavers – but if you are going to arrest them (they obviously did not pay any attention to your dam letter, being unable to read English) – be sure to read them their dam Miranda rights first.

In my humble opinion, The Spring Pond Beavers have a right to build their unauthorized dams as long as the sky is blue, the grass is green, and the water flows downstream. They have more dam rights than I do to live and enjoy Spring Pond. If the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection lives up to its name, it should protect the natural resources (Beavers) and the environment (Beavers' dams).

So, as far as the beavers and I are concerned, this dam case can be referred for more elevated enforcement action right now. Why wait until 1/31/98? The Spring Pond Beavers may be under the dam ice then and there will be no way for you or your dam staff to contact/harass them then.

In conclusion, I would like to bring to your attention a real environmental quality (health) problem in the area: bears are actually defecating in our woods. I definitely believe you should be persecuting the defecating bears and leave the beavers alone. If you are going to investigate the beaver dam, watch your step! (The bears are not careful where they dump!)

Being unable to comply with your dam request, and being unable to contact you on your dam answering machine, I am sending this response to your dam office.

*Thank You,
Ryan Devries & the Dam Beavers*

Editorial Section

SFA - Section E

Will the Last Person to Leave the Institute Please Turn Off the Lights?

As many of you are aware, I have been appointed Vice President of the Construction Specification Institute (CSI) to fill a one-year term beginning July 1, that was vacated by another member. Before I assumed this position, I was aware that the organization faced many challenges in the new millennium, both from industry-based changes in the methods of project delivery and broader challenges from a changing global construction market. I have since come to realize that in addition to these changes in the industry there are internal organizational issues that must also be addressed if CSI is to be in a position to move forward and direct our attention to the larger issues.

The Bad News

For the last fifteen years, CSI membership has been on a steady decline, and in all likelihood this trend will continue. What is causing this phenomenon? Is it the economy? A change in attitudes about volunteer organizations? The death of the specifier? A lack of perceived value in CSI membership? Or perhaps it's something else? And while the Member-Sponsor-A-Member Program is a good idea, with approximately an 80% retention rate and new membership not keeping pace with membership loss, the numbers can't help but get smaller. And not only are CSI membership rates declining, the CSI staff is also experiencing an annual attrition rate of nearly 20% with only two senior staff members having tenure over six years.

The CSI Show is also experiencing tremendous competition from other groups; this year's American Institute of Architects convention in Las Vegas drew 26,000 people, and new shows like EcoBuild America are popping up all over, creating competition for not only attendees but also for the exhibitors. As a result financially things have certainly looked a lot better, as our annual budget has been almost cut in half since I first served on the Board in the 1990s. It seems clear that the solutions of the past will not continue to work.

The Good News

CSI is not the only organization that has gone through tough times. Others have risen like a phoenix from what appeared to be the ashes of disaster. CSI's technical programs are on a roll and the organization is setting new records in sales of technical documents. Other new products are in development and even more are in the infancy of planning. And there is new Board leadership, such as James Robertson, an architect from Eugene, Oregon, and Paul Bertram, a product marketing genius from Orlando, Florida, both forward-thinking individuals with plenty of guts to get things done.

Additionally, despite the turnover mentioned, the Institute staff is being revitalized with many new folks with new ideas and energy. Other positive momentum includes both the continuation of existing and development of new alliances with many other professional and industry organizations that recognize the potential CSI has in its membership, especially in light of our organization's expertise in organizing information, expertise that's of growing importance in a world where information is playing a larger and larger role.

The Solutions

As a member of the Institute Board of Directors and Executive Committee for the next 12 months, I am committed to finding creative solutions to our problems and assisting in their implementation. These solutions may include reorganization of the Board, requiring it to become more responsible for success of the organization; setting benchmarks to help us measure our success; coming up with a realistic plan to address membership decline; and looking at creative ways to partner with others in order to move our programs along faster and leverage our knowledge.

There are other Board members that are also committed to change, for if we don't adapt to the new rules, CSI will die. CSI *must* morph into a different organization than we know today because the industry is changing as

well. Some of the solutions will likely involve hard decisions and CSI members will need to rally behind the elected leadership for they are your voice. President Michael Owen will need your strongest support as we face a year of many challenges. Ronald Reagan perhaps said it best when he said, "I do not subscribe to the belief that our fate is determined no matter what we do, I subscribe to the belief that our fate is determined if we do nothing." If we do not deal with these problems now, will the last person to leave the Institute please turn off the lights?