April 15th is now behind us. Sorry if that is your birthday…. it seems this day comes faster with each passing year and with no extension for me this year (as I give myself a pat on the back), I can now spring forward … pun intended.

For those who attended the Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems demonstration dinner meeting last month, I know you came away with a greater appreciation of concrete and its possibilities. Thank you to our wonderful hosts at Westcoat. It really was a great venue and gave us a unique opportunity to share the evening and networking opportunities with our sister group NAWIC.

This year’s conference theme is ‘Coming Together to Build Better’ and will feature several different tracks of education: leadership training, energy conservation, accessibility training, and trusted advisor training, as well as, numerous opportunities to explore ‘America’s Finest City.’ I hope to see you all there.

If you need any information or would like to help, please let me know. http://csi-tri-region-2015.bpt.me/ is where you can register and sign up for the different events. We are very keen to fill the Zoo dinner (at a special $25 cost savings until April 24th!) and would love to see you all on Saturday evening … I cannot wait to take my family to eat with the zoo animals. It will be a highlight for my daughter, I am sure.

Racquel McGee, CSI, CDT 2014-15 SDCSI President
THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2015—5:30 PM
CSI SAN DIEGO MONTHLY DINNER MEETING
Program: Whole New Light – LED Lighting
Presenter: Maddy Kent, L.C.
District Sales Manager (San Diego & Hawaii)
Philips Lighting North America
Location: The Handlery Hotel and Resort
950 Hotel Circle N., San Diego 92108

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2015
CSI/AIA 3rd ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC—8:30 AM
SHOTGUN SCRAMBLE—
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TRI-REGION CONFERENCE
Cost: $109 - single  $369 - foursome
Sponsorships: $299 w/single  $596 w/foursome
Transportation ON YOUR OWN
Location: Riverwalk Golf Club
1150 Fashion Valley Road, San Diego 92108

WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY
MAY 13-16, 2015
CSI TRI-REGION CONFERENCE
Location: Hilton San Diego Resort & Spa
1775 East Mission Bay Dr, San Diego 92109

$25 ZOO COST SAVINGS!
REGISTER BY APRIL 24TH!

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2015
AFTERNOON AT THE ZOO—4:00-10:00 PM
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TRI-REGION CONFERENCE
Cost: $74 includes exotic animal show, private dinner and dancing,
round-trip transportation between zoo & hotel (leaves hotel at 3:00 PM)
Location: San Diego Zoo
2920 Zoo Drive, San Diego 92101

FULL DAY AT THE ZOO—10 AM - 10:00 PM
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TRI-REGION CONFERENCE
Cost: $115 includes exotic animal show, private dinner and dancing.
Transportation between zoo & hotel ON YOUR OWN.
Location: San Diego Zoo
2920 Zoo Drive, San Diego 92101

DEADLINE for newsletter input: FRIDAY, MAY 22nd
Guaranteed Ways to Boost Your Confidence When You Need It Most

by Jeff Haden, LinkedIn and Inc. Magazine Contributor

A critical presentation. A key meeting. An broken customer relationship you need to repair. Whatever you’re about to do it’s incredibly important... which makes you incredibly nervous.

To perform at your best, what you need is a quick dose of confidence -- which might take more than simply reading inspirational quotes to increase your confidence. (But then again maybe not -- check ’em out.)

While true confidence takes time to develop (because true confidence is based on incremental, steady success), fortunately there are ways you can quickly overcome your anxiety and nerves and perform well:

1. Burn off some chemical stress.

When you feel anxious or stressed your adrenal glands secrete cortisol, one of the chemical triggers of the instinctive fight-or-flight reflex. High levels of cortisol heighten your emotions, limit your creativity, and reduce your ability to process complex information. When you're "high" on cortisol you get tunnel vision just like you do when you're startled or scared.

Here’s what to do: Burn off excess cortisol with exercise. Take a walk at lunch. Work out before you leave for work. Hit the hotel gym before your meeting.

Don’t think it will help? Remember a time when you were totally stressed and decided to work out. When you finished exercising felt a lot less anxious and a lot more grounded. The perspective you gained came at least in part from lowering your cortisol levels.

2. Eat the perfect "pre-game" meal.

Dopamine and epinephrine are two chemicals that help regulate mental alertness. Both are found in tyrosine, which is an amino acid found in proteins.

Here’s what to do: Make sure you include some type of protein in your pre-game meal. And don’t wait until the last minute to fuel up -- the last thing most of us want to do when we’re nervous is eat something healthy.

3. Prepare for a few "What if?" possibilities.

If you’re like me, the "What if?" stuff is your biggest worry: what if PowerPoint crashes? What if my time gets cut short? What if someone constantly interrupts and screws up my flow? Fear of the unknown is a confidence killer -- and can quickly spiral out of control.

Here’s what to do: Think about some of the worst things that can happen and create a plan to deal with them. Then you’ll feel more confident because you will have transformed, "What if?" into the much more positive, "Okay, if that happens all I have to do is..."

Plus simply going through the exercise of planning for different scenarios will make you better prepared to think on your feet and adapt if something unexpected does occur.

4. Go beyond your lucky socks.

Superstitions are a vain attempt to control uncertainty or fear. Wearing lucky socks doesn’t really make anyone perform better.

Here’s what to do: Instead of creating a superstition, create a pattern that helps you prepare and emotionally center yourself.

For example, I like to walk the hall before a speech to check audience sight lines. Maybe you will decide to always do a run-through of your presentation an hour before you go on even though you’re sure you can do it in your sleep. Or maybe you will decide to run your demo one last time before every client meeting, even though you’ve run the same demo dozens of times. Pick certain actions you will perform -- actions that are actually beneficial and not just based on superstition -- and do those things every time. Comfort lies in the familiar, and so does confidence.

(cont’d on page 4)
Meet our new Membership Chairperson

Jessica Sears has stepped up into the role of Chapter Membership Committee Chair. She has been a member of CSI San Diego since 2013 and is excited to work with her committee to reach out to new members and provide an opportunity for our Chapter to grow.

Jessica is currently a Project Designer at Moon Mayoras Architects, Inc. and has worked with students throughout the southwest with her involvement with Alpha Rho Chi. Her goals for the next year are to improve communication through social media and provide feedback to the board on strategies to reach new members. Jessica would also like to focus on creating meetings that promote the value of membership of our great organization.

You can contact Jessica at searsje15@gmail.com with ideas you would like to share or photos that you have from any of our events or if you would like to be a part of this important committee.

Guaranteed Ways to Boost Your Confidence When You Need It Most

5. Establish a secondary goal.

Say you're speaking to a group and your goal is to convince members to donate time to a worthy cause. Pretty quickly you realize almost no one is listening, much less cares.

What do you do? You flounder. Maybe you try too hard. Or maybe you give up and just go through the motions. Whatever you do, you walk away feeling like you failed.

Here's what to do: If you know what you really want may be hard to get, always have a secondary goal in mind. Plan for success but also plan to turn total failure into partial success. If you can tell you won't succeed with your primary goal, be prepared to plant seeds for another attempt down the road.

Say you have an idea and want upper management to okay your project. Midway through you can tell they won't say yes right away (after all, they almost never will.) Be prepared to shift to laying the groundwork for future meetings. Explain what you've done and what you plan to do even if your project isn't officially sanctioned. Lay the foundation for the people in the room to see future possibilities. Lay the foundation for them to develop a sense of trust in you and your idea.

Sure you may want them to say, "Approved!" Shoot, you may need them to say, "Approved!" But you should still be ready to turn a one-time meeting into a series of meetings.

Whatever your primary goal, establish a secondary goal so that instead of losing all faith in yourself and your mission you're ready to transition to that goal. If things aren't turning out the way you hope you'll still be able to stay confident -- and keep moving forward.
CSI TRI-REGION CONFERENCE
Professional and Leadership Development Sessions
Thursday, May 14 and Friday, May 15 - Hilton San Diego Resort & Spa

THURSDAY, MAY 14

Up-and-Coming Leaders Workshop  [T1, T4, T7, T10]  [F1, F7, F10]
An intensive targeted training to help people be prepared for leadership in CSI chapters. You will meet CSI leaders who can be valuable resources for you or just a sounding board. Explore the concepts of What is Leadership, Understand Your Responsibilities, and Develop the Tools needed for Success.

Leadership Development: Share your best ideas and learn from leaders representing the 28 tri-region chapters. Discuss the tools and skills needed to implement successful educational programs, keys to strategic planning and your legal responsibilities as an active chapter board member. This is an unequaled opportunity to learn and share with your peers.

Dealing With the Drought
Speakers:  1)  Teresa Penunuri, Public Affairs Supervisor, San Diego Water Authority  [T2]
2)  Bill Schnetz, Landscape Designer & Contractor  [T5]
3)  Lori Swanson, Water Resources Specialist, San Diego Water Authority  [T8]

- History of Potable Water in San Diego
- Why and How do we import water? Where does San Diego and Southern California get its water?
- Region’s Supply Diversity (Recycled, groundwater, storage, etc.)
- Future supply (potable reuse, seawater desalination)
- How you can make a difference in your water use
- Examples of commercial retrofit conservation projects
- Rebates, resources and funding available for conservation
- Basic Criteria to prepare for a quality drought-tolerant landscape design. Landscape design/build approach in today’s water-conservation environment. Should you still use a “Water Feature?”

Accessible Design Through Knowledge and Understanding
Speaker:  Gregory Izor, AIA, NCARB, CASp – State of California Certified Access Specialist

ADA Continuing Education Training – AIA/CES and CAB Credits

Session 1:  2013 CBC; New Organization, Revisions and Major Additions  [T3]
1.0 AIA/CES and CAB Credits
Learning Objectives: The objective of this training session will be to review key access compliance subjects and become familiar with each one of the following:
- New requirements added to the 2010 ADA and the 2013 CBC
- New organization of the 2013 CBC
- Additions to the Federal 2010 Standards for Accessible Design
- Revisions to the 2013 California Building Code
- Upcoming Revisions to the 2013 CBC; July 2015

Session 2:  Exterior Parking and Path of Travel  [T6]
1.0 AIA/CES and CAB Credits

Each Session shown on this list has an identifying number, such as [F12]. This identifier can be used for quick reference instead of the Session title.

(cont’d on page 6)
Professional and Leadership Development Sessions (cont’d from pg 5)

Learning Objectives: The objective of this training session will be to review key access compliance subjects and become familiar with each one of the following:

- Access to Public Right of Ways
- Accessible Parking
- Multi-Story Parking Structures
- Ramps and Stairs
- Using Truncated Domes Correctly

The Architectonics of Access [T9]
Speaker: Harold Kiewel, AIA, CSI, CCS
Understanding the structure of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design; How we got to “now.”
Objectives: Be able to give an example of the Standards’ “Spiral of Logic” and be able to list several ADA Building-Blocks and explain their use in accessible design.

Harold Dean Kiewel has conducted his whole life as a disabled person, been a disability advocate for almost 40 years, and a registered Architect for over 25 years. Cutting his advocacy-teeth on Section 504 of the 1973 Rehab. Act, and publishing his first book on accessible design in 1977, Mr. Kiewel remains a vibrant force in the fields of Architecture and Design for People with Disabilities.

DSA (Division of the Calif. State Architect) Close- Out: A Primer For Success [T11]
Speakers: Albert Wege, AIA, CSI, CCCA, LEED AP and Carmen Torres, CSI
This seminar will focus on the closeout and certification procedures of public school construction requiring oversight of the California Division of the State Architect (DSA). Specific topics will address items that DSA requires so as to confirm compliance with the approved Scope and to ensure successful Project close-out and certification.

Learning Objectives: Upon completing this course, the attendee will have a better understanding of:

- The difference between successful project Close Out and DSA Certification
- DSA Closeout of Legacy Projects
- DSA Closeout of Current Projects after 2012
- Roles and responsibility of School Districts (Owners), A/E, IORs and Testing Labs

Albert Wege has extensive experience with the preparation of construction documents and construction administration/management for large-scale public and private sector projects. He is licensed in California as an Architect and an OSHPD Class A Certified Hospital Inspector.

Carmen Torres is the Owner of TB&N Consultants. The firm’s focus is closing & certifying DSA legacy projects, State & City agency approvals and project certification & compliance. She has more than 22 years in the construction industry serving education, correctional and healthcare clients throughout the state.

Balboa Park – Celebrating 100 Years [T-BP1, T-BP2]
Come join a private walking tour of this beloved urban oasis of architectural, cultural, botanical and zoological wonders! Get a rare “behind-the-scenes” look at many features not usually accessible to the general public. The 1,200-acre park contains 15 museums, the Old Globe Theater, and the San Diego Zoo. Balboa Park hosted the 1915-16 Panama-California Exposition and 1935-36 California Pacific International Exposition, both of which left architectural landmarks. The park and its historic Exposition buildings were declared a National Historic Landmark in 1977.

Bus or van transportation from the hotel will be provided.
FRIDAY, MAY 15

Becoming a Trusted Advisor (Tips for Product Representatives) [F2, F8, F11]

Speakers: 1) Joy Davis, CSI, CCPR
           Institute Director of Communications / Community / Web
2) David Vaughan, CSI, CCPR
       Manufacturer's Representative with Upland Corp.

What does it take to be a trusted advisor? Regardless of what product you represent, much of your success will be determined by:

- Your ability to manage your network and resources
- Your skills, training, and understanding of construction
- Your integrity and trustworthiness in the eyes of the community you work in

We'll address all three of these areas during CSI's Trusted Advisors Workshop.

Topics:
- Ethics, integrity, and trust
- Developing and managing a network
- Identifying and managing your representation resources
- Know the construction process and the players

CSI has been teaching product representatives to be confident educators and thought leaders in the industry for decades. Because of the Institute's unique mission and membership — we are the only commercial-level construction organization dedicated to improving communication between the teams, and our membership includes architects, specifiers, and product representatives — we understand what today's product representative is facing in the field.

Come to this event if you're ready to talk to product reps. from across the construction community about today's marketplace. We'll discuss what designers want in a representative, how to deliver that service, and most importantly, how to maintain your reputation as a trusted advisor in tough situations. If you are a Certified Construction Product Representative (CCPR), this event will help you meet renewal requirements for your certification.

Legal Matters: Reducing Risk Through Better Contracting and Construction Administration [F3]

Speakers: 1) Dorothy Amundson, CIC, PWCA
           Cavignac & Associates
2) Christie Swiss, Attorney
       Collins Collins Muir + Stewart LLP

Dorothy Amundson is an insurance Account Executive specializing in professional liability with architects, engineers, environmental consultants, and lawyers. Christie Swiss is an attorney who specializes in the areas of professional liability, legal malpractice, design and construction professional defense, insurance and related litigation, and labor and employment law. This unique presentation will discuss areas of concern for design professionals from both the legal and insurance perspectives. Areas of potential liability to be discussed include: Contracting, Design Phase Services, Bid and Construction Phase Services, RFI's and Change Orders.

Low-E Coatings for Glass [F4]

Speaker: PPG Architectural Glass

How Low-Emissivity (Low-E) glasses manage energy from the various parts of the solar spectrum to control transmission of heat & light into buildings. Why all Low-E coatings are not created equal. Review various building types in multiple climates and illustrate how building performance can be enhanced through proper glass selection. Analysis of common performance measures for exterior glazing utilized by the U.S. Dept. of Energy.

Let's Play “Insulation Jeopardy!” [F5]

Speakers: Karl Michels, Michael Stoner and Dave Ware
          Regional Specification Specialists for Northwest Region, Southwest Region and West Region, respectively

(cont'd on page 8)
Professional and Leadership Development Sessions

Knauf Insulation will present a one-hour long AIA-accredited session, titled “Glass Mineral Wool Insulation in Environmental and Energy Efficient Design” in a “Jeopardy” gameshow style format. No single speaker, no one-direction presentation; this is about involvement, interaction, and fun while learning about this important project material. Come join us as we determine which of the 3 Western regions knows their “stuff” about insulation in this light and informative, fast-paced presentation.

- Glass Mineral Wool Insulation Basics
- Fire Safety
- Thermal Performance
- Acoustics/Noise Control
- Sustainability
- Health and Safety
- Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) and Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)
- Specifying Glass Mineral Wool in Project Design
- Energy and Building Codes

The Power of Primer  [F6]
Speaker: Peter Gaeta, Behr Paint Co.  (1 LU/HSW)

Today’s primer products provide so much more than simply prepping your walls. Technological advancements have produced coatings that also offer increased protection of substrates and reduced maintenance costs – all with minimal impact to indoor air quality and the environment. This presentation will provide you with the fundamentals of different primer systems so that you can specify coatings that will provide the best outcome for your clients.

ARTIC – Building the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center  [F9]
Speakers: 1) Albert Kaneshiro, AIA, LEED  Vice President, HOK Architects/Engineers
2) Kazem Toossi, AIA, LEED  Vice President, HOK Architects/Engineers

The Anaheim Regional Intermodal Transportation Center (ARTIC) is a truly groundbreaking, iconic, and complex project. It took a trailblazing effort from all parties involved to bring ARTIC to fruition on time and within budget. ARTIC opened in December 2014, and is on track to achieve a LEED Platinum certification. The project had to foster an environment of collaboration and partnering. Various aspects of the project will be presented, from the client’s vision to innovation, technology and breaking the boundaries of traditional procurement. The tools gathered from this project can help you make your project a success as well.

ARTIC is the new premier transportation hub in Southern California offering a unique variety of transit, dining, retail and entertainment options in one convenient location. ARTIC is an iconic design hub that brings together the services of OCTA, Metrolink, Amtrak, Anaheim Resort Transportation (ART), Megabus.com, Greyhound, taxis, bikes, and other public/private transportation providers.

The Next Generation of Access Control  [F12]
Speaker: Larry Fosnight, Assa Abloy Door Security Solutions

There has been much technological advancement in door opening technology over the last several years. This presentation is intended to give an overview of the technology options available today and trends developing for the future. Participants should receive an understanding of technology to help them make decisions to maximize their physical security investment and improve their overall return on investment. The presentation will have opportunities to discuss applications and code related strategies.

Educational objectives to be covered in the presentation:
- Introduction of the options available in door opening security today
- Discussion on managing door opening technology in Specification Sections
- Review of emerging trends
- Discussion of codes related to physical security

(Cont’d on page 9)
Professional and Leadership Development Sessions
(cont’d from pg 8)

Speaker: Larry Fosnight is an experienced physical security consultant who works for ASSA ABLOY. In his career he has helped design the mechanical and electronic security of airports, government agencies, healthcare facilities, higher education, and major corporate campuses. His expertise includes door openings, electronic access control, fire and life safety codes, and accessibility compliance.

Design & Construction of San Diego Airport Rental Car Center [F13]

Speakers: 1) Morten Awes, AIA, CSI, Project Architect San Diego County Regional Airport Authority
2) Brian Lahr, Construction Manager San Diego County Regional Airport Authority

This is a 2 million sq. ft. facility costing about $220 million; LEED Silver. Participants will gain a further understanding of how the Construction Manager-at-Risk (employing Design-Assist) differs radically from Design-Build and Design-Bid-Build delivery methods. See how planning & design objectives impact numerous stakeholders and the community, such as bussing, restaurants, and the Coastal Commission.

SATURDAY, MAY 16

Historic Tour of Coronado

Saturday, 10:00am - 2:00pm [Add’l charge; not included in base registration fee.]

We'll start our day with a 90-minute guided walking tour (11:00am - 12:30pm) followed by free time for lunch, shopping or exploring the beautiful Hotel Del Coronado. Situated just across the big bay from downtown San Diego, Coronado is most notably known for two famous structures, the historic 1888 Hotel Del Coronado and the distinctive San Diego-Coronado Bridge. But beyond these architectural marvels, the quaint island community of Coronado offers visitors an experience that is a world apart. Coronado’s coastline offers gentle surf and sparkling sand beaches (courtesy of the mineral Mica) that draw in visitors from around the world. Add to this a charming small-town quaintness, with elegant gardens, old-world mansions, unique shopping experiences, and dining options with spectacular ocean views, no wonder it’s been dubbed as “The Crown City” (Coronado is Spanish for “the crowned one”).

Club van transportation from the hotel is available at an additional charge if you don’t drive or carpool.

2015 CSI Tri-Region Conference

Although the Show Special deadline has passed, orders are still being taken for Conference Logo Shirts.

Click on this ad to access the order form.
Haystacks:
Do construction documents do what they’re supposed to do?

by Sheldon Wolfe, RA, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, CSC

The purpose of construction documents is simple: They tell the contractor what is needed to complete a project. How best to do that has been a subject of debate for a long time, even though a basic set of rules has been used at least as far back as the 1940s. In his “The Case For the Streamlined Specification”, published in the July 1949 Construction Specifier, Ben John Small referred to a book titled "Specifications" that was written in 1896; the older book apparently discussed some degree of streamlining.

That’s fine as far as it goes, but if the intent is to clearly communicate with the contractor, are we doing as well as we could? Architects and specifiers have a nice collection of rules for organizing information, but do they make sense for the contractor? Our rules are fairly consistent, and they are generally accepted by design firms, but can they be improved? A large project may take a year or more to complete, yet we still have inconsistencies and conflicts. Is it fair to expect a bidder, who typically has only a few weeks to figure out what we want, collect subcontract bids (many of which are incomplete or include qualifications), decide how much to include to cover the inevitable problems, and arrive at a competitive price?

Can we do better than asking contractors to find the critical information in a haystack of information that is less important?

Let's start with what works. Streamlining is the practice of removing many of the words we would use in ordinary conversation, but which add nothing to construction documents. A big step toward simplification is achieved by a simple change of mindset; if you understand that specifications and drawings are instructions written to the contractor, rather than a disinterested explanation of what is to happen, the rest will be easier. When teaching certification classes, I tell the class to write as if they are talking directly to the contractor. If you are talking with a contractor you won’t say, “The contractor shall fill the bollard with concrete.” Instead, you would say, “Fill the bollard with concrete.”

As noted, this is a big first step, one that will automatically eliminate the "shall be" phrases that still are far too common. But even more can be done to reduce the length of specifications without losing critical information. While some things may need something approaching a complete sentence, most requirements can be reduced to what amounts to a checklist. Each item begins with a subject, followed by a colon (defined to mean "shall be" or similar term), followed by the relevant property. For example:

Air content: 5 to 8 percent.
Insulation: ASTM C578, Type IV.

If the property is evaluated by a reference standard, insert the standard and qualifying requirements before the colon.

Compressive strength, ASTM C109, 28 days: 7,000 psi.

Note that this checklist approach translates very well to properties found in BIM objects.

It's fairly common practice to eliminate the articles a, an, and the. In most cases, this works well, but I retain the article when referring to the Architect, the Contract, the Contractor, and the Work, to take care of those situations when those terms occur at the beginning of a sentence. Otherwise, there is no way to differentiate between the contractor identified in the agreement (Contractor) and a contractor working on the same building but under a different contract.

(cont’d on page 11)
Even though streamlining is relatively easy to do, many firms - and even commercial guide specifications - do not use it as much as they can. Another common problem is lack of coordination: specifications that conflict with each other and with drawings, drawing notes that appear to have been written without any understanding of what's in the specifications, and drawing notes that ignore the basics of writing specifications. If that's the best we can do, and it appears that it is, we haven't made much progress in the last hundred years.

The Heretic Specifier suggests rearranging the haystack

Consider these words of wisdom regarding PageFormat, and consider applying them to everything we do:

The first concern of the Page Format is an improved and clearer presentation of the construction message. … The writer and the reader were put before the typist, the printer, the equipment manufacturer, but without placing unreasonable demands upon any of them. … The Page Format should then exhibit a reasonable amount of text density, providing visual recognition of the Parts and lesser levels, and arranging the subject matter in a logical, efficient and versatile page.

– excerpts from the CSI Manual of Practice, June 1974

Although specifiers can have an influence on drawings, let's look at how specifications can be changed to improve communication with the contractor. Let me start by saying that there is no excuse for contractors who don't look at the documents; "We don't do it that way" is a non-starter. On the other hand, it's not uncommon to hear "I didn't see it!" as an excuse for non-conforming work. It's easy to point to our rules and principles and say, "Too bad for you!" but in doing so, are we ignoring the problem? There is no doubt that some contractors just do what they're gonna do, but there are many occasions when I can't help but sympathize with a contractor who's trying to do a good job, but doesn't understand the way we do things.

A couple of responses are possible. We can go out of our way to educate contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers about the intricacies of our various formats and standards, but other than saying contractors should join CSI, not much of that happens. And, truth be told, many in the design professions, including our own members, don't follow the very principles we espouse.

Another approach is to reconsider how we do things. At a recent convention, Nashville perhaps, there were a number of presentations that took this approach. There was healthy discord and disagreement about the proper use of the "Section Includes" article, and about other aspects of writing specifications, as well. Unfortunately, as far as I'm concerned, those discussions did not continue.

Why isn't this concept applied to all construction documents? Until the day that a significant number of contractors are not just CSI members, but CDTs, we can't just sit back and expect the rest of the construction team to understand what we do. If we're interested in progress, if we truly believe in improving communication, shouldn't we consider changing what we do for the benefit of the rest of the team?

This will be a bit off-subject, but bear with me. How many of you use what appears to be a standard format for meeting agendas and minutes? You know, the one with a lot of blank space at the top for the date and subject, followed by a list of those invited or those who attended, which can run to two or more pages, followed, finally, by the information you're really interested in?

If you think about it, that's a dumb way to organize agendas and minutes. The day after the meeting, will you really care who was there or who wasn't? Especially if the agenda or minutes were sent out under a transmittal form, which duplicates the same information?

Why do we write specifications in the same manner? Instead of starting with the important stuff - what's in the section - we ramble on for a page or so, talking about procedural items, then sandwich the good stuff between that and the how-to information. I know, the "Section Includes" article usually has a generic comment or description, but is that what a contractor is looking for? In most cases, the title of the section tells the contractor about as much as the "Section Includes" article.

What if we rearranged things to make it easier for contractors? Keep "Section Includes", but state what's in the section, including basis of design products; then go on to talk about performance standards, options, and the other stuff that directly affects the contractor, subcontractor, and installer. Follow that with special instructions regarding installation (shouldn't be much unless you know more than the manufacturer), then end with an appendix of information about submittals and other procedural matters. If it's easier for contractors, it should be easier for architects and specifiers.

© 2015, Sheldon Wolfe, RA, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, CSC

The question, “What makes a building memorable?” is the theme running through Witold Rybczynski’s book, *How Architecture Works, a Humanist’s Toolkit*. The book begins with a discussion of architectural basics and continues with a description of the architect’s craft before launching into the most thought-provoking sections of the book, for both architects and non-architects alike, the chapters on architectural “style” and “taste.” The object is to provide the reader with a thought framework within which each of us can view a building and form our own opinion as to whether the building is memorable or not.

Why is this necessary, why can’t we rely on the architect’s explanation of the design, or an architectural critic’s opinion? Sometimes these are written in ways that don’t make sense to non-architects, and in other cases they’re unintelligible even to experienced architects.

The book begins with a description of the idea from which the building grows; Rybczynski calls this the *parti*. Several examples are cited where the *parti* was obvious; the Sydney Opera House and Philip Johnson’s Glass House are the most familiar. He explains the importance of a building’s setting and distinguishes this from concerns raised by the building’s site. For example, an addition to an important piece of architecture is a case where the setting is critical. Should the addition contrast with the existing architecture or in some way mimic it? A building can ignore its setting (perhaps to its peril), but it can’t ignore the physical characteristics of its site. Rybczynski points out the importance of a building’s front entrance in relation to its site. Considering a building’s floor plan, Rybczynski says this is the starting point for a good building and critical to the design of its façade. The origins and evolution of symmetrical floor plans via the Beaux Arts tradition are described and contrasted with non-symmetrical plans of the early 20th century Bauhaus School. Another important factor in the design of a building’s exterior skin is the building’s structure, should it be expressed or not? Mies van der Rohe nearly always expressed it while many other architects (Frank Gehry at his Walt Disney Concert Hall, for example) do not. However the building exterior is designed, Rybczynski correctly observes it’s the exterior of a building alone that creates the most lasting impression among non-architects.

While an architect doesn’t always have control over his site or the setting, he does have control over a building’s details. How materials meet each other and how smaller building elements are designed have a huge effect on the overall success of a building and can also have important cost implications. Poorly detailed buildings cannot only look bad, but they can also suffer shorter lives. Architectural details, to be successful, must be consistent with the overall character of the building. As an integral part of the architectural design, they are distinguished from surface-applied ornamentation that has little inherent relation to the native architecture and is therefore not viewed favorably in modern design.

Rybczynski defines “style” in the customary way it’s done in architectural history: Greek, Roman, Gothic, Neo-Classical, Modern, and Post-Modern and so on. He also acknowledges that some architects create their own style simply by repeating the same or similar design elements on all their projects. Frank Gehry, Richard Meier, and Frank Lloyd Wright are three

*(cont’d on page 13)*
Rybczynski defines “style” in the customary way it’s done in architectural history: Greek, Roman, Gothic, Neo-Classical, Modern, and Post-Modern and so on. He also acknowledges that some architects create their own style simply by repeating the same or similar design elements on all their projects. Frank Gehry, Richard Meier, and Frank Lloyd Wright are three good examples. The 20th Century debate over Neo-Classical vs. Modern architecture is presented using the competitions for the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials as examples. In both cases the Neo-Classical designs won. In contrast, at the design for the St. Louis Gateway Arch, Eero Saarinen’s Modern design prevailed. The triumphal arch, going back to ancient time, was reinterpreted by Saarinen in an elegant, abstract, structurally efficient design. Keep in mind Saarinen won the competition at the end of WWII, when Neo-Classicism was still very much alive, even if not in vogue. This section of the book concludes with a thoughtful section on the design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial by Maya Lin.

Rybczynski’s theory on “taste” is that it’s learned and that it can change over time as we grow and are influenced by new ideas. Taste depends on one’s attitude towards, among other things, the suitability and fitness of a particular shape or color, and attitudes toward simplicity, and proportion. Freshman architects all take an “Elements of Design” class in an effort to clear their minds of home-grown tastes and instill in them a new, common set of aesthetic values, a new taste. Some architects dismiss taste as anti-intellectual, and not a legitimate basis for design, arguing that there’s no basis for taste in philosophy or even craftsmanship. To the contrary, Rybczynski argues that taste is so deeply ingrained in each of us it can’t be dismissed. How else can one explain the differences between the architecture of Frank Gehry, Norman Foster, Robert Venturi, and Robert A. M. Stern? In the end, there are many good architectural designs, and what’s good for one person may not be good for another depending on individual and changing tastes. There’s no scientific proof available in the world of architecture.

How Architecture Works was published in 2013 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. It has 355 pages and includes many small but very useful photographs of the buildings described in the text. The author is himself an architect and the author of 17 other books including several on architecture and design.