

BOARD REPORT

Northeast Region Board Meeting

June 17, 2021



DATE: June 10, 2021
TO: Northeast Region Board of Directors
FROM: Jim Grucella, CSI Member Emeritus, Region Director
SUBJECT: Report of Buffalo/WNY Chapter

A. Report Summary

The countrywide shutdown in March of 2020 dealt everyone a losing hand including the Buffalo/WNY Chapter of the CSI. We regrouped and managed to enjoin the with purpose in November of 2021. Our Newsletter is once again a clarion to our Chapter and our many web contacts. Our premier fund-raising activity *Architect's Ski Day* is on course for the winter of 2022. The Chapter is solvent and our monetary affairs are in order. Monthly meetings will have a good foundation of interesting presentations. Our membership numbers, although stagnant through the shutdown will increase with new outreach and benefits to our construction community.

B. The Report

1. Summary of activities since last report: The Buffalo chapter was nearly dismantled by the Covid Flu. Our last actual meeting of 2021 occurred in early March arranged by our Academic Liaison Suzanne Daddis with an AP Architectural HS Class. While there were some stirrings, little was done to manage the Chapter. It was further complicated by the fact that the presiding President was outgoing in June. These stirrings and twitches gradually became accusations and activity in November. A new President and Board was elected, the old editor Jim Grucella of the newsletter, *The Scope*, was conscripted and our first virtual meeting debuted in February. Each subsequent month, *The Scope* became a more viable publication word spread, our website contacts responded. We can be found included in the Region Website. Our monthly meeting attendance gradually reached a high of 62 in our June meeting. Our Board met this month to discuss our highlight fund-raising activity, *Architect's Ski Day*, headed up by Joanne Harris which has successfully taken place in February since 2018 but was necessarily cancelled in 2021. Tasks, procedures and expectations were discussed and delineated. Our Treasurer Bill Ferguson has taken charge of our finances and consolidated various accounts and signed with Travelers Property and Casualty for our liability insurance. We are solvent.
2. Status of current programs: Other than working on the *Architect's Ski Day* for February 2022 we have discussed holding actual person to person meetings in September as we had done prior to March of 2020. We enjoyed the experience of the Region Scholarship Auction which gave our chapter members some 'esprit de corps'. One item was donated and three items were taken by our Chapter amid much lively competition and banter. The Board will be working to secure new monthly meeting presentations for the coming year. We are continuing to solicit new members with invitations for the ski day and the ever-standard referral and recommendation methods as well as our continually expanding web notification system. Our newsletter continues to reach a growing number of individuals and has tapped into some of the writing skills and expertise within our chapter. Our Program Chair, Deb Seiner arranged five stimulating virtual meeting topics that were well attended. Three were material oriented and two exceptional presentations were concerned with specification design and pitfalls. We expect to begin in-person meetings in September with timely interesting presentations.
3. Problem areas: While the Buffalo/WNY Chapter seems to have risen to overcome a severe abyss, and virtual board meetings set us on the right path, the actual rapport of human interaction has been

lacking. It is fortunate there is personal knowledge and experience of working together in the immediate past. New members are less easily attracted by computer screens than by personal contact so our membership has stagnated. We also need to enlarge the net of our operating Board and committees with fresh committee members to relieve some of the weight of our tasks.

4. Success stories: A new President, Devin Filipiak, has imbued new commitments and taken strong leadership to focus us in a positive direction, and as our Communication Chair he has implemented new procedures and access to our website. A new spirit of cooperation has grown between the board members. A revitalized newsletter is winning readership. We are beginning to have paid advertisers featured within our pages. The Chapter is realizing the benefits of cooperating in the Northeast Region. Our Certification Chair Kevin O'Beirne has materially contributed to the SCI's Construction Contract Administration Practice Guide by Authoring three of its seven chapters. We intend to again offer prep courses in the Spring of 2022. After a rocky November, our personal relationships and humor enabled us to regroup and function once again in a positive direction.
5. Schedule of activities prior to next Board Meeting: We will be actively working on soliciting sponsorships and attendees for the Ski Day along with attracting new members. *The Scope* will be working on obtaining articles and improving our message. We will be looking for a venue to hold our monthly meetings. Our Program Chair will actively continue to find new topics of interest for our presentations.
6. Changes in Chapter Membership since last report: Our membership has remained stagnant in the last year, which in its own rite is an achievement. New prospects have been identified and now that we have a functioning Chapter again, things will improve as we now have much to offer the construction industry. The national lockdown has disrupted our Chapter as I am sure others have experienced.

C. Best Practices to share with the Region

I am certainly prejudiced because of my position of editor in the Buffalo chapter through time, but one of the central salvations of our Chapter during this frightful time was the re-emergence of our newsletter, *The Scope*. While it had fallen into disrepair since 2016, when I had to take a leave of absence, it was not difficult to pick it up again. Our Board members were pleased and began contributing articles immediately. This was a great sort of 'campfire' to gather around and renew friendships and purpose. It was how we came together. We were fortunate to have Kevin O'Beirne to contribute on a monthly basis with professional and timely articles.

I believe a newsletter is important to the identity and growth of a chapter.

Respectfully submitted;

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END OF REPORT

Cc: Region Secretary