

# BOARD REPORT

## Northeast Region Board Meeting

### June 17, 2021



**DATE:** October 15, 2021  
**TO:** Northeast Region Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Jim Grucella, CSI Member Emeritus, Region Director  
**SUBJECT:** Report of Buffalo/WNY Chapter

#### A. Report Summary

While the Buffalo/WNY Chapter has regrouped it is still struggling with membership and community. Our 'Octoberfest' meeting this month is a sign that we are ready to engage again as a unit inclusive of members in many disciplines. Our newsletter *The Scope* once again heralds our people and activities to our Chapter and our many web contacts. It is also a source of informative and humorous articles from Kevin O'Beirne. 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 have shown a slight increase in the last month.

#### B. The Report

1. Summary of activities since last report: We spent made sure we enjoyed the summer with a minimum of texts and phone calls and kind of merged into action at the end of August. Our program chair arranged a virtual meeting while some of us felt the need to have an actual in-person event. Due to time restrictions the virtual AIA accredited event was chosen and had successful attendance. Some of the Board expressed that while architects and engineers have benefitted from all the virtual learning sessions online, industry members felt that their needs were not being addressed sufficiently. We attempted to have an in-person learning event, but were unable to put everything together. So we held a social 'Meet and Greet' celebrating Octoberfest at a Hofbräuhaus (German beer garden) for members, new members and prospective members. The event, though disappointing from an attendance standpoint (we always hope for the impossible), was a real success in quality of personal re-connection and introduction of friendships, both old and new.
2. Status of current programs: New vigor and affirmation have energized our Architects' Ski Day event in February for 2022. Fresh ideas and commitments are leading towards a great event after missing last year! This is an important fundraiser for the Buffalo/WNY Chapter. The Programming Committee is diligently working towards a 'Catch-up Learning Unit Forum' for November, featuring three or four presentations to aid architects and engineers in achieving their educational requirements. We have lost our prior meeting venue due to the effects of the Covid Flu and are entertaining new businesses relationships for our future meetings. There is some difficulty in estimating actual attendees since many members are used to joining us on their computer screens without expending any energy. Our newsletter continues to reach a growing number of individuals and has tapped into some of the writing skills and expertise within our chapter.
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: President, Devin Filipiak, has forged 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. Stressing a committee concept, where we had committees in name only

with the Chair shouldering all the weight of the tasks at hand, he is spreading communication and responsibility among more individuals making tasks easier. A new spirit of cooperation has grown between the board members. A revitalized newsletter is winning readership and has been receiving articles from many of our members especially from Kevin O'Beirne who is a well-known CSI Specifier contributor and blogger. We are beginning to see paid advertisers featured within our pages. The Chapter is realizing the benefits of cooperating in the Northeast Region with a nod to the Scholarship Auction success. Our Certification Chair Kevin O'Beirne has continued to engage with the SCI's Construction Contract Administration Practice Guide by administrating three of its seven chapters. We intend to again offer prep courses in the Spring of 2022 and there is a possibility of Kevin working with the Region as an instructor in a united Certification Teaching group shared by many Northeast Region Chapters

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: We have added 2 new members. 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

### **C. Best Practices to share with the Region**

We continue to promote our newsletter as an advertisement for the Buffalo Chapter. It lists our Board Members, Committee Chairs and monthly activities for easy access. The unstructured 'Meet and Greet' event was a success and fostered a feeling of community and reminded us of our commitment to all of our members. While virtual meetings are a viable tool, actual meetings are key to engaging and including everyone to share our knowledge and experience.

### **Respectfully submitted;**

Jim Grucella, CSI Member Emeritus  
Region Director, Buffalo/WNY Chapter  
5575 Big Tree Rd.  
Orchard Park, New York 14127  
716-997-6320  
j.gru@verizon.net

**END OF REPORT**

Cc: Region Secretary