

Hot Corner 55

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This is numerically what the mutual fund pitchmen would refer to as the “freedom” corner, anticipating with keen foresight that it would be writ

in a *chaise longue* on an endless sandy stretch, icy brown bottles at hand whilst communing with one’s environmental cocoon as visions of a Bikini atoll scroll past . . . we interrupt our regular programming to bring you the sound of needle scratching vinyl record, restoring reality.

Many architects are hitting their professional peak at this age, and they’d better, because they have no pension plan and are reaping the benefits of paying little attention to (or having little aptitude for) business. That’s why we’re developing guidelines for RFPs (Requests for Proposals); the Ontario Association of Architects is triggering research into our profession’s financial culture; and the AIBC is expanding its business portfolio in professional development offerings. Staytuned.

(And, Dad, my six-year-old said, looking up from the monitor, What’s a vinyl record?)

H-E-L-P: “HOW TO ENABLE LUDDITE PARTICIPATION”

This is a diminishing but still pertinent question. Those of you with colleagues who are not online, please encourage their growth in that direction so they may have access to the wealth of resources available electronically, to assist their professional development, their practices, and their degree of connectivity. Post our *eNews* widely within your places of business and share a hard copy with the unplugged. Watch for the results of the AIBC PD survey distributed in November 2002 concerning computer literacy and usage.

TAKING LICENCE WITH YOUR BUSINESS

A number of municipalities have begun to require that architects (even those whose offices are in other municipalities) have business licences as a condition of submitting designs/drawings/letters of assurance for permit applica-

tions. The City of Vancouver has had the ability to do this for some time under its Charter, but other jurisdictions are attempting this without clear legal authority. Please share your experiences with the Hot Corner.

MUNICIPAL INVADER

Without attribution, as was promised to the inspector describing one of our members who became a building official: “One of your architects just went over to the dark side.” Ba-da-boom.

LIEN ON ME

Recent court judgement has ruled against a lien claimant seeking the *Builders Lien Act’s* (BLA) protection for services rendered prior to construction. This precedent, if unchallenged or if not undone in a subsequent case (perhaps with a different set of facts and/or more eloquently argued), is completely opposite to the clear intent (and wording) of the BLA. That is confirmed with not only AIBC, APEGBC, and BCCA representatives who participated in the BLA’s development, but also with legal counsel and provincial government staff similarly involved. Please contribute your views on this matter.

ACCESSIBILITY ANGLE

Direct quote (honest) from an architect practising in the Interior of BC: “The plan-checker said he was inclined to reject the ramp as built.” Ba-da-bing.

MANAGEMENT OF PROJECTS: A PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATION

Many experienced practitioners can relate the advantages of a well-managed project, from both the architects’ or engineers’ perspectives and (especially) from those who build from our designs and drawings and those who own/develop/occupy/operate the results. The managed coordination of a project (or, if you prefer, its coordinated management) is critical to success.

For those with selective memories or short attention spans . . . short attention spans: Those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. The “Save-On Foods” collapse over a decade ago need never be repeated if we learn from the lessons articulated in its commissioned follow-up report and recommendations.

One strong suggestion was that a construction industry “Manual of Practice” be prepared, with special note of the roles, responsibilities, and interface of all project participants. The AIBC took the initiative to do exactly that (under the leadership of Derek Neale, Terry Mager, and your faithful scrivener), which elicited industry-wide support. The project came a cropper when faced with provincial government refusal of funding or encouragement, but after an interval of many years, there now appears an “exposure draft” of just such a manual. The current project is led by the Project Management Institute (Chris Quaife and MAIBC Matti Saar in particular), again with industry participation, including a number of individual MAIBCs (notably Dave Galpin and Brian Sim).

This draft has come to AIBC Council for review, with Paul Rust assigned as liaison, and is ripe for commentary. The manual’s working group should request the AIBC’s endorsement in some fashion this spring. Members are invited and encouraged to review the exposure draft, download part or all of it from www.bcprojectsmanual.com (make sure the paper tray is full), and provide their feedback to Paul Rust or myself via hotcorner@aibc.ca. Tell us what you think of the content, its usefulness to the intended audiences, its portrayal of the relative roles and importance of the players (including architects), its emphasis, and its intelligibility.

SAFETY SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

The provincial government is in the concluding stages of preparing new legislation and associated regulations regarding centralization and standardization of disparate acts and protocols governing elevating safety devices, electrical and gas installations, and the like. Our Regulatory Coordination Committee recently hosted a presentation by Harry Diemer and Lynda Cronin from the CAWS Safety Engineering Division. Members are invited to view this project’s Website at www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/ses/transform in order to provide feedback to the Ministry by email at Transformation.Feedback@gems3.gov.bc.ca, copied to Committee Chair Dave McGuigan at dmcguigan@ghl.bc.ca.

INDUSTRY-ENDORSED STANDARDS FOR GOVERNMENT USE

No, that's not the first oxymoron of the new year. The provincial government has officially ceased the "hosting" and mandating of its stipulated-sum construction contract, along with its variations on client/architect agreements. Unfortunately, it has not directed line ministries, crown corporations, or project-specific clients as to what else to use. To head off potential chaos, the AIBC (along with the BC Construction Association and with the cooperation of our engineering colleagues as well as an enlightened set of ministry and client representatives) is leading an initiative to (i) have CCDC-2 and NPP-6 endorsed as base contracts; and (ii) develop a small set of supplemental conditions necessary for implementation on schools, universities, colleges, hospitals and — cross your fingers — social housing.

Again, your input is welcome. If you receive agreements to sign which cause you to flinch, please contact your legal and insurance advisors; take strength from Bylaw 28, which requires your terms of engagement to be consistent with those of NPP-6; and keep us in the loop through MAIBCs Gregg Brown of KMBR and Brett Smaill of DGBK (on behalf of the Educational and Healthcare committees, respectively) with copies to this Corner.

LUs 'R' US

We've all now come through, one way or another, our first Continuing Education System (CES) reporting period. Much has been (and will continue to be) communicated elsewhere, but it seems appropriate now to express appreciation and reinforced respect for the clear majority of our members who understand the reasons for and the value of the system we adopted.

As we return from our December break, perhaps the AIBC's picks for the "top three responses" to our reminders about mandatory LUs will generate some gallows humour:

3. "What Learning Unit system?"

2. "Yeah, I heard something about it, but I didn't think it applied to

me." 1. "I learned everything I needed to know 35 years ago; there is absolutely nothing that is offered of any value; and besides, I have no time because I'm struggling and starving as I have for 35 years."

I'm pleased to report that these responses were in the clear minority; and, even better, that most of those who generated them, including the source of our 'Number 1' pick, were turned around in time to achieve CES compliance. Happy New Year . . . n

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