CSC Members Juggle Change

The theme of this year’s CSC national conference, held in Montréal from May 25 to 28, was “juggling changes”—a reference to both the fast-paced evolution of modern design and construction, and to the ‘cirque’ connections of Québec’s largest city. When life gets too hectic, some dream of running away to join the circus, but CSC’s last 12 months have been nothing if not positive. Membership went up, a new designation was created (Construction Specifications Professional [CSP]), and important management contract documents and MasterFormat were updated. Websites have been redesigned, education courses refined, and a green-focused Tek-Aid is another step closer to fruition.

CSC’s official publication, Construction Canada, has also grown, with the addition of a seventh issue and a French-language sister in the form of Le Magazine Construction. Meanwhile, one new chapter has formed (Vancouver Island), and another has been reborn (Grand Valley).

Despite these successes, the association is not interested in resting on its laurels. At the national conference, held at the Delta Centre-ville, the focus was very much on meeting the ever-evolving challenges of the future.

A conference-planning committee led by Pierre Hébert and CSC vice-president Claude Giguère bid welcome to hundreds of delegates—many wearing headphones to allow for translation into English or French—from across North America. The goal remained the same from years past: engage in professional networking, technical education, social fun, and discussions on the continued mission of the country’s most interdisciplinary group of design/construction professionals.

This year, Giguère’s team faced the problem with popularity, nearly becoming victims of their own success.

“One month before the conference, we were sold out on sponsorship, delegates, and companions—the venue was full,” he said. “We had to work with the hotel and use our imagination on how we were able to accept more people. We finally found solutions, allowing us to register approximately 50 additional people to the conference.”

Good times in Old Montréal

Aside from professional development and networking opportunities, one of the most important aspects of the conference is the changing of the guard, as the new CSC president takes the place of the former one. After a Reed Construction Data (RCD) Canada-sponsored reception, the President’s Gala Ball gave members the chance to see Bruce Gillham, CCCA, CTR, assume the leadership.

The dinner and dance, sponsored by Chemdur, was also a chance for the immediate past-president—Corinne Golding, RSW—to offer thanks for a successful stint.

“It was bittersweet to pass the torch to Bruce. The term is only one year, but there is such a lead-up to being president, and the time goes by so fast. Bruce will do a great job—he’s a real ‘people person,’” she told Construction Canada.

Golding also had her time to shine the night before, when she made a surprise appearance as part of the Cirque Eloize troupe. During the CGC-sponsored Fun Night, delegates were whisked away to the renowned Québécois circus venue, where a fire-eater, drinks,
and hors d’oeuvres greeted them. Soon, their president trapezed down from the ceiling to join them.

“I wasn’t nervous—I knew the Cirque Eloize staff would not let me do anything risky,” she said. “Marcus Gauthier, my coach, was awesome. He was a little surprised that I was so comfortable and was able to do what I did without a lot of coaching. But I did have bruises from the harness!”

The rest of the night was filled with feats of strength, contortion, acrobatics, and wild dancing (this last one was from the audience, rather than the performers). In between the spectacles, those in attendance were able to network and bond in a more relaxed setting.

For Stephanie Fargas, an assistant specifications writer at Dialog, this was her first time attending the national conference.

“I was astonished with the overwhelming acceptance from the members; I was truly humbled and grateful for their optimism they bestowed on all the new members as the future of CSC further develops,” she continued. “I firmly believe networking is at the core of what is needed to succeed in the economy, but ‘networking’ in the sense of creating long-lasting relationships with the individuals you meet. These relationships not only serve as a means to propagate technical knowledge about construction practices and documents, but to also foster social relationships.”

Another first-timer, Milenko Varjacic (an architectural technologist at Cannon Design), agreed.

“The actual experience at the conference was much more than what I expected. All the people are friendly, willing to help in any way, and very motivated,” he said. “Everyone was encouraged to see a younger generation being part of the organization, which led to in-depth conversations. Being engaged with people from other chapters was very beneficial for my development and participation with the association.”

It was also the first show for Paul R. Bertram Jr., FCSI, CDT, LEED AP—the new president of CSC’s U.S. counterpart, the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI).

“Highlights for me include the face-to-face opportunities to meet CSC members,” he said. “During the annual general meeting, I was amazed the chapters donated almost $80,000 back to the association for the advancement of the CSC mission.”

“Our two groups are very much aligned with similar missions. In many ways, CSC is somewhat advanced in their certification programs. Also, the interaction the association provides their members is a great experience,” Bertram continued. “CSI does not currently have an event that delivers the same venue experienced at CSC. This conference was like our Academies and gala banquet rolled into one.”

Finding inspiration

At any CSC conference, one of the highlights is the keynote speaker. This year, there were two: one was a hometown hero who rekindled his love for hockey in northern Québec, and the other was an activist-entrepreneur working to help children in the developing nations. Despite this seeming disparity, the conference’s two keynote speakers had much in common.

Joé Juneau, veteran of both the National Hockey League (NHL) and the Silver-winning Team Canada in 1992, spoke at length about his activities since professionally retiring from the rink. Best known for playing for the Boston Bruins, Washington Capitals, and
Montréal Canadiens, Juneau discussed his work in developing a program for Inuit youth in Nunavik.

Juneau recounted his first experiences in this isolated region, north of the 55th parallel—a vast area that is scarcely populated with 14 small towns and villages separated by distance and inhospitable terrain. In this region, only 10 percent of the youth complete high school, while shockingly high rates of poverty, abuse, suicide, and drug use are seen as commonplace. The Nordic communities, Juneau explained, have gone from a nomadic lifestyle to a sedentary one in a very short time; the cultural upheaval has been difficult, to say the least.

To help encourage well-being and sustainable development in the local communities, Juneau worked as part of a team to bring hockey to remote schools. His challenges and successes were highlighted, as he made clear the possibilities when sports are used to bring people together.

The work of the second speaker, Marc Kielburger—co-founder of Me to We and Free the Children—is perhaps more international in scale, but no different in its goal of youth empowerment. Since 1995, his organization has built more than 650 schools throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa, and established over 30,000 projects to help women and their families achieve incomes. With the involvement of 3500 Youth in Action chapters and schools, Kielburger and his partners have helped provide daily education to more than 55,000 children in 16 countries.

In a talk sponsored by Dow Building Solutions, Kielburger drew parallels to what he does (i.e. building schools) with the work of the larger Canadian construction community. The Harvard and Oxford grad (and frequent Oprah guest) recounted stories of those whose lives his charitable work has touched, and those whose lives have touched him.

He also discussed myriad ways in which the private building sector could learn from the way his not-for-profit groups operate. Kielburger cited the importance of drinking tea with project partners (i.e. taking the time to fully understand wants and needs) and the beauty of the Quechuan word ‘minka,’ which refers to individuals coming together for the good of the community. (It is a word, Kielburger wryly noted, that has no real equivalent in English.)

**Learning opportunities**

The additional speakers at the national conference may have brought forth other types of inspiration. Carol Allain, M.Sc., M.Ed., discussed various generations—from Boomers to Gen Y—and how these disparate individuals can get along while working on the same project. Frequent *Construction Canada* contributor Vrej Armen-Artinian co-presented a topic on “The Future of Specifications.” Other subjects ranged from client retention strategies, earthquake mitigation, and net-zero operations to wood design, building information modelling (BIM), and spec-writing workshops in both official languages.

Coming up with the right technical curriculum was crucial, Giguère explained. “It was a big challenge to get a technical program aligned on our theme of ‘juggling with change.’ We gathered a team and brainstormed for several months. The next step was to find the speakers capable of doing such presentations, and willing to come,” he said. “As an example, there was a lot of energy spent to find and convince Mr. Petre Grütter to do a
presentation on nanotechnologies. It was worth it—the presentation ended up being awesome.”

“The quality of the technical program was one of the highlights,” Giguère continued. “You can’t imagine the quantity of people who said to me, ‘I wasn’t able to figure out which session I was going to attend because I am interested by all three of the topics.’”

As in years past, education went beyond the conference rooms—delegates were able to see the latest building products in the exhibit hall and at Connections Café, discussing with manufacturers the future of construction materials. Offsite learning came in the form of two organized tours. Many attendees signed on for visits to the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) and Maison de Développement Durable—a milestone in sustainable design that serves as an illustrative example for the possibilities with green practices. Meanwhile, companions of the delegates were off on organized excursions of their own, from Notre-Dame Basilica and shopping on la rue Ste-Catherine to cafés in Vieux Montréal and sandwiches at Schwartz Delicatessen.

New fellows
Part of this year’s national conference was the 44th induction ceremony of the College of Fellows. This year, the two named were Brian Colgan, RSW, LEED AP, and H. Wayne Yarjau.

Colgan joined CSC in May 1993. Less than a decade later, he was elected director of the Atlantic Chapter, and served as a member of the Registered Specification Writer (RSW) Committee. In 2005, Colgan became the national association’s vice-president, before moving on to lead CSC for the 2009–2010 year. Along the way, he authored So You’re the Chapter Chair Now, helped start the online version of the Technical Representative (TR) program, sat on the Uniform Drawing System (UDS) Task Team of Construction Specifications Institute (CSI), and received numerous CSC awards. Over this past year, he was also Construction Canada’s editorial advisor.

Colgan has worked continuously for 40 years at Halifax-based WHW Architects. A seasoned project manager and senior specification writer, he is responsible for the preparation and implementation of contract documentation. He works with all sectors of municipal, provincial, and federal governments in procuring development agreements, and assures officials that local codes, zoning requirements, and national code standards are adhered to in all documents.

“To me, becoming a Fellow is the highlight of my time at CSC,” Colgan said. “I’m very proud of the recognition, and it’s something I will carry with me for a long time. Sometimes, you think you are not deserving of the award, as many other people spend hours volunteering. Still, when I received the letter from Nick [Franjic, CSC executive director], informing me of the vote to elect me, I was one happy camper.”

The other new Fellow, Wayne Yarjau, has experience in project co-ordination and specifications writing spanning 42 years. He is an associate at Dialog, responsible for producing architectural specifications, for co-ordinating other disciplines in the team, and for tendering bid documents. He is also a technical resource specialist, and has vast knowledge of building codes at the provincial and national levels.

Since 1987, Yarjau has held various CSC positions on his Calgary Chapter Executive. For his work, he has received numerous awards, both at the Chapter and Association level.
“Becoming a Fellow has never really entered my mind. I was quite surprised, thankful, and appreciative of the news,” Yarjau said. “I was also blown away at the attendance at this year’s conference despite the varied ups and downs you hear in general conversation across the country. It’s great to see the harmony, professionalism, and dialogue among the attendees.”

**Awards and honours**
Fellowship may have been the greatest honour, but it was far from the only accolade given out at the conference. During the MAPEI-sponsored awards lunch, Stephen Revay, FCSC (Calgary) held court, calling members up to the podium to receive their plaques of appreciation.

**Marketing**
Lori Brooks was cited for her instrumental role as part of the Marketing Committee. Her expertise in production, digital media, and graphic design was particularly lauded in her achievement of a Program Directors’ Award.

**Conferences**
For their work in organizing the Montréal conference, the following received Program Directors’ Awards:
- Claude Giguère;
- Peggy Assouad;
- Michel Bourassa;
- Anne-Marie Bourque;
- Michel Brière;
- Sophie Brochu;
- Paul Cartier;
- Danielle Couture;
- Claude Frégeau;
- Pierre Hébert;
- Steven Lanthier;
- Éric Lavoie;
- Réal Leblanc;
- Salvatore Ciarlo;
- Yvon Lebrun, FCSC;
- Roxanne Pagé;
- Sofia Racanelli;
- Michel Robert;
- Thierry Ségard;
- Sylvain Valcourt; and
- Michel Viau.

**Education Certification Committee**
Awards from the Education Certification Committee (ECC) went to Steve LeBlanc, CTR, and Cam Munro, CTR, for the TR online course. As instructors for the beta test group, their feedback was a valuable resource for improving both content and delivery. The
award also went to Mitchell Brooks, FCSC, and George Heath, FCSC, for reviewing the Specifier 2 program.

Technical Studies Committee
This year, the Technical Studies Committee (TSC) Award went to Wayne Watson, FCSC, RSW.

Chapter/Membership Development and Communications
One of these awards went to Terrence Bergen, CCCA, for his determination in forming the Vancouver Island Chapter. The other recipient was the Grand Valley Transition Team for its efforts to revitalize that chapter. Its members include:
- David Boyle, CTR;
- Mary Kay Bailey, CTR;
- Cathie Schneider, CTR;
- Colin Goheen, CTR;
- Gregg Jackson;
- Jane Fish, CCCA;
- John G. Smith; and
- Mel Lavoie, CCCA.

F. Ross Browne Award
Each year, the F. Ross Browne Award goes to the Construction Canada article chosen by CSC’s Executive Council as best exemplifying the magazine’s mission to provide technical, objective features. The most recent winner is “Fast Track Collaboration on the Canada Line,” by Joel Nauss, Gord Mann, and Glen Holloway. The September 2010 article discussed a $2-billion, 19-km (12-mi) transit system in Vancouver that was the country’s biggest public-private partnership (P3).

Reflecting on the future
As this year’s event drew to a close, delegates already found themselves with a taste of the 2012 conference, thanks to commemorative chocolates made by the Ottawa Chapter’s planning committee. Just a few short steps from Parliament Hill, the Delta Ottawa City Centre will be the site for CSC’s next national conference in May.
Preparations are already well underway for finding speakers, locking down technical sessions, and devising another memorable Fun Night. The theme is “Reflections”—an apt one for an association that focuses on the future, while building on its past.

Chapter Awards
Chapter Awards of Merit were presented to individuals who contributed to CSC’s advancement at the local level for a substantial period. (Each chapter can bestow two such awards for the first 100 members, and one additional award for each additional 100 members or part thereof.) This year’s winners were:
- Colleen Barabonoff, RSW (Calgary);
- Jacques Beaulieu (Winnipeg);
- Garry Booth (Saskatoon);
- Barb Boroskae (Winnipeg);
● Mitchell Brooks, FCSC (Atlantic);
● Emily Chau (Toronto);
● Mark Clemmensen (Toronto);
● Beverley Darling (Vancouver);
● Ralph Finck (Winnipeg);
● Brent Fraser, RSW (Saskatoon);
● Marlene Hooper (Regina);
● Allan M. Johnston (Ottawa);
● Richard Kassner (Atlantic);
● Kazim Kanani (Toronto);
● Steve Londry (Edmonton);
● Ross McIntyre (Regina);
● Daniel Morin (Montréal);
● Len M. O’Connor, CCCA (Edmonton);
● Kelly Sawatzky (Vancouver);
● Vince Smith (Vancouver);
● Mike Thornber (Ottawa); and
● Sylvain Valcourt (Montréal).

Lloyd Boddy Chapter of the Year Award
The Lloyd Boddy Chapter of the Year Award recognizes outstanding achievements based on criteria ranging from membership and industry participation to technical activities, professional development, and communication. This year’s winner was the Vancouver Chapter.

Membership Awards
CSC places enormous importance on the membership and volunteers driving its very existence. Each year, the association inducts people into its ‘Eureka Club’ for sponsoring at least three new members within a calendar year. During 2010, the following achieved these goals:
● Terrence Bergen, CCCA;
● Pierre Hebert;
● Terry Johnson, FCSC;
● Kelly Sawatzky; and
● Betty-Jo Tell, CCCA.

Of course, it is not solely about the potential of new members; it is also about the power of seasoned ones. Longevity Awards were given to the following individuals for achieving milestones in their relationship with CSC.

10 years
Rick Adams, RSW
Barb Boroskae
David Boyle, CTR
Shawn Doiron
Mike Garlinski
Steve Gusterson, CTR
Jason Hicks
Chris Makepeace

15 years
Dwayne L. Penner, CCCA

20 years
Rocque Desjardins
John Rocheleau
David Watson, FCSC

25 years
David Reburn, CTR
Matthew E. Roberts, RSW
Catherine Saar-Paradis, RSW, CCCA
Sandro Ubaldino, FCSC, RSW

30 years
George V. Heath, FCSC
Dennis B. Looten, FCSC

35 years
Fred A. Wright, FCSC,

45 years
Yvan Hardy, FCSC