



It seems appropriate to be writing this note on Columbus Day (or what we celebrate as Columbus Day being, as a people, not very tied to any calendaric formulation but rather adhering to the easy convenience of Monday holidays). Columbus sparks many contradictory feelings in Americans and historians alike but there is little doubt that his running into an island in the Bahamas or the Turks and Caicos (exact location being the subject of additional debate) resulted in the establishment of both a new frontier and a new idea. It took 15 years for Martin Waldseemüller to name it America and put it on a map.

The new idea was subtle enough at the time; others were discovering distant lands and claiming them for their Kings. But this distant land would later become a refuge and a source of aspiration and hope for millions of immigrants who would relocate here. The hope was that the shackles of restrictive, prescriptive, hereditary and exploitative systems would be loosened or freed and diligent people could lead purposeful, rational lives in relative freedom and prosperity.

This may seem like an extended and unlikely metaphor for the recently concluded 13th Annual Congress of the Lean Construction Institute. But we celebrated the new frontier crafted largely through the work of Glenn Ballard and Greg Howell. Their pioneering efforts to make work on projects more reliable have finally come to flower. It has taken LCI 15 years to stake a beachhead for predictable flow in the design, construction and commissioning of the built environment. But we seem to be moving inland as evidenced by the more than 250 people in attendance on Wednesday and Thursday at the Congress. Thanks to Victor Sanvido and his committee, we had multiple presentations of Owner successes and challenges in lean design and construction. The mood was buoyant, there was a growing sense that we can loosen the shackles of a restrictive, prescriptive, hereditary and siloed project design and delivery process and start sensibly and economically delivering projects of higher quality with enhance safety.



Glenn is surprised by the award; Greg is praying for the presentation to be over.

Now that the celebration is over, I can get to the business of thanking all of those that helped. Those of you who attended can attest to the tireless work and energy of Donna Pemberton in being the LCI staff for the Congress. At her request, Donna and I spent an hour on the phone every day for the 45 days leading up to the event. All of the details of the Hotel, the Gala Dinner, the meals, the handouts, the awards, the venues, the AV—were taken care of by her concerted efforts. It was never been truer than to say this could not have happened without Donna. THANK YOU DONNA!



Shannyn Heyer-Cardin, our “part time” bookkeeper kept us updated every day for 45 days on our breakeven proposition and flew out from Boston to help Donna person the admin table. She also pulled together the numbers and information used in the State of LCI report at Wednesday’s lunch. She sends you your invoices; be careful to thank her for her efforts by returning your renewal checks promptly. THANKS SHANNYN!

Most prominent from our Board and Member list was Victor Sanvido who started working on the conference in May and hasn’t stopped yet, already filling my mailbox with “lessons learned” for next year. Will Lichtig, as usual, was ubiquitous at the conference. He emceed the Gala Dinner, was a Champion for the Thursday morning presentations, conducted a Built in Quality Plan 3 hour seminar and generally continued to smile throughout it all. The Conference Committee included great work and contributions from its members—Eric Ahlstrom, Dave Hagan, Romano Nickerson and Mark Konchar. Eric aided the LA COP Mark also championed the Thursday afternoon efforts, delivered a presentation on Parkland Hospital and has agreed to chair the 14th Annual Congress Committee. The Los Angeles Community of Practice also had volunteers at the admin table by 6:30 every morning. Thanks to Jessie Robertson of RTKL, Dave Fabulich of Taft Electric, Jose Felsmann of Southland, David Hagan of Bernards and... Thanks to Mike Henry of Pankow for supplying projectors and easels for the week; that saved us several thousand dollars.

Thanks to Glenn and Greg for being such good sports and giving us a starting basis for an oral history of LCI. Greg, as usual, served on the Conference Committee, directed our attention to Improvement, Integration and Innovation and kept a sure hand on the probity of the affair, offering his congeniality and knowledge to all who button-holed him.

The problem with starting a spate of “thank yous” is that one inevitably leaves somebody out. You know who you are—THANK YOU!

The fall continues to be meeting time and LCI continues to sponsor major events. I’ll be in Denver this Friday, October 14, talking about lean contracts with the Colorado Community of Practice. Two Community of Practice kick-offs are just around the corner. The Mid-Atlantic Community of Practice kicks off its chapter events with a focus on the Owner’s Perspective on October 27. Perennial Lean Champion Bill Seed of UHS will join Tom Mutchler of Corporate Sponsor Air Products as the featured speakers. The Chicago Community of Practice is kicking off their organizational efforts November 17-18. Communities of Practice in Arizona, Northern California and Wisconsin have offerings coming up this month. Hardly time to catch our collective breath. See below for more complete information on all the offerings.

Once again, we are a community of practice with a tradition of sharing. Thanks for sharing your stories and your support. We can’t do this without you.