



## ***The Great Three-Martini Convention***

This column is being written immediately after the 1978 Fall Convention of the Institute. I wanted to preserve, if I could, my impressions of this event; and to solicit the help of the membership in making our good conventions even better.

With continued apologies to those who may think I use my dictionary too much, a convention has been defined as: "—a body or assembly of persons met for some common purpose: a formal and special or regular assembly of delegates or members of a party or association met to accomplish some specific . . . object; or for the exchange of ideas, views, and information of common interest to the group —" This definition pretty well explains the reasons behind our conventions. Article IV of the Institute Bylaws directs the Board to hold at least one annual convention. Since 1947 two conventions have been held each year to expedite the flow of committee work and standardization activities, and to stimulate the exchange of ideas and information by supplying an additional opportunity for symposia and seminars.

Conventions don't just happen! In most cases (including Houston) a large local committee is busy for more than a year before the assigned date. Hotel commitments must be made several years in advance. This can have peculiar consequences — for example, one of our companion organizations suddenly realized that their convention hotel had been demolished by a wrecking crew! ACI convention policy provides for the use of excellent hotels, so we're unlikely to have this difficulty.

Three standing committees are involved in long range convention planning:

- TAC is responsible for the technical content of the program.
- EAC is responsible for the educational content of the program.
- The Convention Committee is responsible for scheduling, for physical arrangements, and for format. Some social events fall under their purview, too.
- Finally, the Convention Coordinator on our staff sees that everything happens!

Convention Week is a busy time for your officers and staff. There's a meeting of the Executive Committee, and at least one meeting of the Board. TAC must meet for several days to accomplish its agenda, and so must large technical committees, like 318. The President is an *ex officio* member of all committees (Bylaws, Article III, Section 13). More than a few of the more than one hundred chairmen are upset if he doesn't participate in their meetings!

How can we make our conventions better? How can we persuade those members, who don't attend, that the ACI convention experience can be a delightful one for themselves and their families, besides giving them an opportunity to discuss problems and pet theories with the leaders of the industry? You tell us! We need your comments. Send them to me, and they'll be considered carefully and acted upon where possible.

Maybe the title of this memo will scare some people away. I spent more than a week in Houston, and did experience a close encounter with several martinis. However, I did not see a single whoopee cushion, handshake buzzer, or other relic of Brinkmanship or Babbitry! Nor did I see any of the more than 800 attendees acting in a nonprofessional or juvenile manner (except for some of the kids who came along with their parents).

Thanks to the City of Houston for having us. The next convention will be held in Milwaukee next March. Be there — you'll be glad you came!

# President's memo



## *In Praise of Chapters*

Way back in 1956, a group of ACI members from the Los Angeles area needed a vehicle through which to inform local building authorities and code-writing bodies about the ACI Code, which was in limited use at that time on the West Coast. The idea of a local organization to bring concrete people together was born, and taken to the ACI Board of Direction — where it was not received with general enthusiasm. Finally, in 1958, the debate ended favorably, and the Southern California Chapter got its charter amidst loud clicking of tongues. The idea has since caught on; and we now have 36 chapters in the United States, 5 in Canada, besides 3 in South America, and 1 in Iran. We have even had a spin-off — the Japan Chapter, which has since become the Japan Concrete Institute.

I'm pleased to have taken a minor part in the establishment of our first chapter, because I believe the chapters play a very important role in the development of a broader base of membership for the Institute; and a broader scope of service to the membership. They provide:

- a forum where local problems can be defined and resolved
- social contacts for persons with similar interests
- an opportunity to get acquainted with experts in many fields, through chapter programs
- the nucleus of local committees who work with Staff to sponsor seminars and conventions
- a potential source of new members for ACI International

Chapters get copies of all ACI publications; and quite a number have fine concrete libraries, open to members and the public.

Article VI of the Institute Bylaws deals with Local Chapters. They are chartered by the Board of Direction, and may be dissolved by the Board if interests of the Institute are best served by such drastic action. The Chapter Activities Committee recommends policies for the operation of chapters and encourages formation of new ones. It reports directly to the Board. It is important to understand that the chapters are not independent entities; but “. . . provide a means of advancing the interests of the Institute in a specified geographical area, and of furthering the chartered objectives for which the Institute is organized . . .” (Article VI, Section 1). Both CAC and the Chapter Boards are reviewing this mission, and changing direction, if necessary, to comply with it.

Ten or fifteen years ago, when life was a little more simple and slower paced, it was possible for the President to visit all the chapters during the year of his administration. Now, it's a practical impossibility. Instead, a series of Roundtables brings representatives from six or eight chapters together at one time to meet with National officers and staff. In this way, a chapter will be “visited” at about two-year intervals. The Roundtables develop an amazing amount of information about all kinds of subjects.

So, if you're in the area of a chapter and aren't a member — join! You'll find it will enrich and expand the value of your membership in ACI International. If you're already a chapter member, but inactive, as it were, in ACI International, come to a national convention, or join one of our technical committees — you'll be glad you did. Let me, or the Headquarters' Staff know if you need information. We want to help.

Support your Local Chapter! You may not realize it; but it's supporting your work in the Concrete Industry.

# President's memo

## The things

## I didn't get done



An ACI President holds that office for approximately one year, and is not eligible for immediate re-election. As you read this column, my term will have nearly run its course. An appropriate time, I think, for reflection and review!

No matter how strongly he is motivated, it's practically impossible for any president to mold ACI into his own concept of what it ought to be. Even though I spent three years on the Board and two years as vice president before my election last year, I would have been hard-pressed to turn over a shiny new Institute to my successor. And this is good. By its very nature, its charter and its by-laws; and its systems of review and standardization, checks and balances prevent reckless swings of Institute policy to the right or left. At the same time, innovation and risk are not precluded, if the proper safeguards are there.

During my term of office, I've been fortunate to have:

- A Board of Direction which was not afraid to debate questions with depth and intelligence, and to vote "No" on the matter they thought would bring discredit to the Institute
- Two outstanding vice presidents who were always there when I needed them
- Our corps of past presidents who accepted demanding assignments without blinking an eye
- The committee chairmen and members, without whose voluntary effort, ACI would quickly fade into the sunset
- Our Executive Director and his Staff who work harder and get more done than most anyone realizes
- The strength of the Institute — our members in all classifications

My first memo, published last May, contained some goals I set for myself. Let's have a look at them now:

- *Membership* — There were reasonably good gains in membership during the year; but they weren't quite up to expectations, especially so far as students, sustaining members, and certain occupational groups are concerned. We now have an excellent document, prepared by an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board, to use as a future guide for action.
- *Journals* — The two-journal concept has begun successfully. Now we must keep it going without loss of momentum.
- *Finances* — The Institute's financial position is sound, thanks to our Financial Advisory Committee, attention to administrative detail, and a tough Board.
- *Staff* - Our Staff is being developed and augmented; and this important work will continue permanently.
- *Chapters* — I regret that I couldn't visit all the chapters, and meet each member. I discussed the complexities of this last month.

My successors are fortunate to have a guide document on the duties and responsibilities of the president, which I asked another Ad Hoc Committee to prepare. This has been a great help to me, although it was just approved by the Board in Houston. One of the most important, disciplinary, (and sometimes exasperating) duties is meeting the deadline for this column! However, I've enjoyed it, and appreciated your comments, pro and con.

Thanks to all who have made this a wonderful year for me!