

Welcome speech

After traveling 2 years to the different FCAA meetings, I cannot help but say, that the whole experience has been: eye opening, marvelous, heartwarming, meaningful and wonderful, to say the least. The revealing of many tropical marvels, treasures and true beauty is what traveling the Islands has brought me. I have said it before, and will repeat it. We, from the Caribbean Islands, may differ in many ways, our languages, our ethnicity, our cultures, even our architecture. But we have learned to overcome our differences and look at what united us, will strengthen us. On a personal basis, I must add that I consider all of you some of my best friends!

So, I would like to say to those who are not [yet] in any way actively involved with the FCAA; being part of the board is not about position or status, it isn't about hard work or spending numerous hours of work. It is about dedication to our craft, building friendship and hope for ourselves, now and for the future. *Look at it in a different way. As architects we make the plans, the blueprint for the construction of buildings and structures. As human beings, we also have the responsibility to make the blueprints for a better environment, a better world, for everyone to live in.*

Having said all of that, I would like to invite all architects from the Caribbean Basin to join the FCAA, in any way they see fit to their own personal agenda. Most of the time I spent in the service to the FCAA, was with my Friends of Creativity, talking about everything that is on the mind of an architect. I have no regret whatsoever. Well, maybe one. I should have started sooner!

Many thanks go to,

Ronny Lobo, past president, from Curacao: who has dedicated much of his time to promoting and strengthening the ties within the FCAA.

Serge Gunot, past first vice president, from Martinique,

Orlando Hoevertsz, past secretary general, from Aruba,

Sean Lenard, past vice president for the English speaking countries, from Trinidad & Tobago,

Sylvia Lafontaine, past vice president for the French speaking countries, from French Guyana,

And not present, Efreem Garido, past vice president for the Spanish speaking countries, from the Dominican Republic.

Also Jack Sainsily, past president and honorary member of the FCAA and Emile Romney.

Words of gratitude for your ongoing support to our federation and that you may receive many golden coins from above...

Special mention and many thanks and "beaucoup de merci pour tout votre travail" to the organizing committee for this 4th FCAA Congress in French Guyana. To many to mention, strangers who became friends overnight, have worked diligently and took it upon themselves to carry out this difficult but very important task to once more organize such a wonderful event. This is what the FCAA is all about.

With great honor I would like to introduce to you, the new FCAA executive committee for the ensuing term 2008-2010:

Sylvia Lafontaine, first vice president, from French Guyana

Erick Halley, secretary general, from Guadeloupe

Alain Zozor, vice president for the French speaking countries, from Martinique

Augustin Poyotte, vice president for the English speaking countries, from Saint Lucia

Mauricia Dominguez, vice president for the Spanish speaking countries, from the Dominican Republic

Maup Janlouw, vice president for the Dutch speaking countries, from Curacao, and

Leo Ponson, president, from Aruba



The good work of those who labored before us will continue. The FCAA has established a name, a fame, a tradition, we should not let all of this go to waste. Continuation and participation is of utmost import to continue the journey into the sometimes unknown.

Ronny, yours are big shoes to fill. But I will try, and with the help of the new board and all the architects of the Caribbean we will succeed.

Architecture is about shapes and sizes.

Architecture has not succumbed to the deterioration and barriers which language has created between men. Architecture, using shapes, or symbols, might be considered primitive, but in essence is still the most pure form of communication between men, who appear different from the outside, but are all created equal on the inside.

Architects have overcome the difficulties of language by making use of shapes, as seen as symbols.

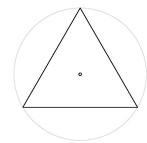
Speak a certain language and not all will understand. But gather around a design, a sketch, or architectural plan and language becomes less important and even useless.

Different shapes have different meanings, even to different architects. Which interpretation is correct is not the question. The quest for an answer is what will eventually lead to solutions.

Creativity is the essence; shapes are mere tools to achieve it.

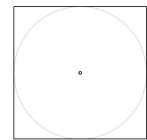
The triangle, as a symbol of trinity, could direct to:

- △ Knowledge and respect for one self (*as the architect*)
- △ Knowledge and respect for others (*such as the client*)
- △ Knowledge and respect for all the whole universe (*such as all things and all beings*)



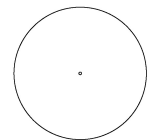
The rectangle, as a symbol with four right angles, directs to:

- Always act right, be fair
- Always speak the truth, impeccable
- Always feel right, true
- Always create right, without flaws, striving to perfection



The circle, as a symbol without beginning or end, directs to:

- ⊙ The endless continuity of all things and matters
- ⊙ Endless beauty, without beginning or end
- ⊙ A circle of friends
- ⊙ Endless friendship between architects and even all men
- ⊙ Standing facing the center of all being, LOVE!



My dear friends, the friendship within the FCAA has brought us closer and made unbreakable ties.

These can never be broken,
No one can break the circle,
Nothing can take it apart.

We must strive to enlarge and strengthen our circle of friendship, our sanctuary.

So let us last but most certainly not least, ask the great architect of the universe to help us on our unique and most precious journey to beauty, by the wisdom and strength of mankind.

My friends, I salute you all.
With my Love.

Leo Ponson

October 2nd, 2008

