

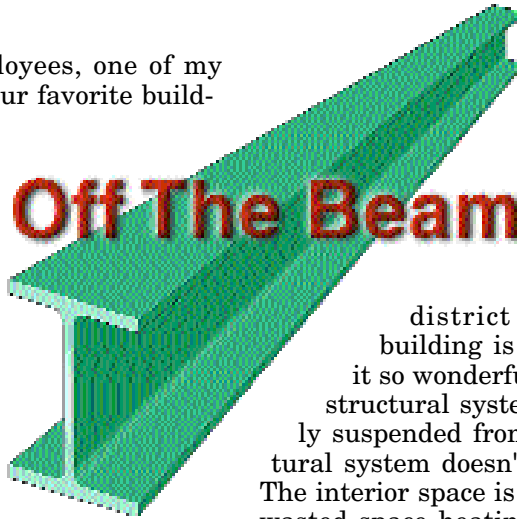
When interviewing new employees, one of my favorite questions is: "What is your favorite building in the Chicago area?"

For Allison Schwartz, AISC's new meeting planner, the answer is the Field Museum. According to Allison, the museum's striking main hall is a wonderful place to hold a special event and her answer was perfect for someone applying for her position.

For Charlie Carter, AISC's Director of Engineering and Continuing Education, the same question elicits a much different response. Charlie is particularly entranced by the site-specific beauty of 333 West Wacker Dr., the exposed steel and innovative tubular construction of the United Airlines Terminal at O'Hare International Airport and the expressive and integral structure of Marina Towers.

My favorite buildings in the Chicago area are far more obscure.

Topping my list is the Shand-Morhan Building in nearby Evanston, IL. The story I heard when I first wrote about this structure nearly two decades ago was that the designers at Murphy-Jahn were hard at work on the glass facade, but something just wasn't right. Helmut Jahn happened to be walking by; he stopped, took out his Montre Blanc pen, leaned over, drew a small arch on top of the facade, and walked away. The arch is a masterful stroke. I've actually taken a picture of the building and covered over that small arch-without the building just doesn't look good. But with it, it's a beautiful structure. I think I fell in love with that



building because to me it will always represent the genius of a master designer.

Next up on my list is the Field House at Niles West High School in Skokie, IL (my current hometown-though my school district in Niles North). While the building is quite attractive, what makes it so wonderful for me is the brilliance of its structural system. The structure is essentially suspended from exterior masts so the structural system doesn't take up room on the inside. The interior space is purely functional and with no wasted space heating costs are minimized (something I can truly appreciate as a taxpayer).

I find discussions of people's favorite buildings (and bridges) to be fascinating-and I'd love to hear from you about your favorites. Give it some thought and drop me a note (mail, fax or email; my "addresses" are all listed below) before the end of September. Include the name and location of the structure (particularly important if your choices are as obscure as mine) and a brief description of what makes the building special. I'll print as many of the responses as I can in the December issue.

P.S. - If your favorite building is of recent vintage, say completed after January 1, 1996, you might also consider entering it in the AISC Annual Engineering Awards of Excellence. There's no fee and the winners will be included in the March issue. For complete information, see pages 48-49.

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