



Notes from the Editor

Scott L. Melnick

In Internet parlance, I'm what's known as a lurker. Fortunately, that's not as bad as it sounds. Lurkers are people who subscribe to email list serves, but instead of actively participating, we lurk in the background. I monitor several steel- and structural-related list serves for a variety of purposes. Mostly, I find the questions and answers to be extremely educational. Occasionally, I'll forward a question to someone who will then post an answer. But I also use the list serves as feedback for subjects both for *Modern Steel Construction* and the North American Steel Construction Conference (NASCC).

And judging by the questions posed on the list serves to which I subscribe, the upcoming NASCC (May 9-12 in Ft. Lauderdale) should be a bonanza for every structural engineer, steel fabricator, detailer and erector.

Probably the most frequent topic of discussion deals with connection design. Boy, has the NASCC got that one nailed. The conference is offering a 10-hour tutorial on connection design, including bolting, welding and connecting elements, with emphasis on the detailed design of shear, moment, bracing and a variety of other steel connections. Faculty for the tutorial, which is included with a full conference registration, includes Thomas M. Murray, Ph.D., P.E., of Virginia Tech.

Almost as common as questions about connections are questions about LRFD. This year's conference is offering a repeat of last year's extremely successful 10-hour LRFD tutorial. Offered by Louis Geschwindner, Ph.D., P.E., of Penn State, the course provides a practical foundation for structural engineers to begin using LRFD in their design office.

One of the list serves I monitor is dominated by west coast practitioners so, not surprisingly, questions about seismic connections abound. This year's NASCC offers a two-part session on SAC Prequalified Steel Connections, including the Reduced Beam Section, Welded Flange Plate Connections, Coverplate and Improved Moment Connections (OMF and SMRF versions). Speakers include James O. Malley from Degenkolb, Brett Manning for Herrick Steel, Mark Saunders from Thompson Engineering, and Mark Holland from Paxton and Vierling Steel. In addition, the conference has programs on Seismic Retrofit and Seismic Stability.

I was very happy last week when several questions popped up about heat straightening. I've long been fascinated by this subject and this year's conference offers an intensive session on the principles and practices of heat-straightening repair. Taught by Rick Avent from Louisiana State University and the FHWA's Krishna Verma, this presentation will cover both the fundamental principles of heat straightening and how to implement them.

One subject which has received slight attention on the list serves I watch is the use of the Internet for project management. It might be that the topic is too new, but the NASCC is offering two sessions on this fascinating concept. Given the nearly 50 sessions offered at the conference, it's hard to list them all, but other sessions that particularly interest me include:

- Innovative Structural Systems (including Smartbeam, Flexframe and a built-up composite columns);
- Staggered Truss Framing System for Residential Construction;
- Recent Developments and Future Directions in Steel Plate Shear Walls;
- Payment and Contract Issues for Erectors;
- Design/Build: Issues and Solutions;
- Steel-Framed Parking Structures;
- EDI: How Does it Work?;
- Detailing Software: Making the Right Choice; and
- Detailer Training (including a look at three successful programs).

As if that wasn't enough, the NASCC also offers three pre- or post-conference short courses, including project management for small- to medium-sized projects; floor vibrations; and bracing of steel structures.

You can view the entire program on AISC's website at www.aisc.org, or fax 312/670-5403 and we'll be glad to send you more information.

Hope to see you at the conference!

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