



Scott L. Melnick

My third child (Jason, for those of you keeping track) is a stereotypical little boy. He's incredibly active: when he's not running, he's jumping. Put him in a room with a selection of toys and he immediately gravitates to the cars, trucks, and construction equipment. Short of causing general havoc, nothing keeps him occupied longer than playing with his "Little People" set, including the ever-popular construction crane.

To be honest, I kind of enjoy playing with some of his toys, which is why I'm especially looking forward to one special exhibit at the upcoming Steel Conference (March 24-27). The Manitowoc Crane Group will be demonstrating its full-scale crane simulator on the exhibit floor in Long Beach. Attendees will have the opportunity to sit down in a duplicate of an actual crane cab and "operate" a crane. (Of course, attendees looking for a little education with their fun will want to attend the session on "How to Select Cranes and Rigging.")

Another exciting addition to the Conference are two sessions on blast and progressive collapse that were adapted from the recent AISC/SINY Symposium in New York.

On Thursday, Ron Hamburger of Simpson Gumpertz and Heger will be presenting a session on the "Design of Buildings with Performance-Based Blast and Progressive Collapse Requirements." Also on Thursday, Stephanie King, Weidlinger Associates' Director of Risk Analysis, will present information on "Vulnerability Assessment." Weidlinger was the consultant to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in the development of their risk-assessment program, and King's presentation on how to determine the level of protection required for a particular structure is fascinating.

On Friday, Shankar Nair from Teng and Associates will present a program on "Progressive Collapse Basics," which will be followed by a presentation from Jon Magnusson of Magnusson Klemencic Associates on the "Performance of Buildings with No Specific Blast or Progressive Collapse Requirements" (or as I like to call them, "normal buildings").

I'm also excited about this year's Pacific Structural Steel Conference. This international event is held every three years in a Pacific Rim country (for example, in 2001 the conference was in Beijing). While most of us can't routinely attend conferences in Korea or New Zealand, California is readily accessible. This is a one-time chance not just to learn about some of the design advances in other countries but also to meet some of their leading experts. And this year, there's an emphasis on seismic design.

Finally, I should point out that we inadvertently omitted one session from the original program (though the web site version does include it). On Friday at 8:30 a.m. and again at 3:30 p.m., Jim Fisher from Computerized Structural Design and David Samuelson from Nucor Research and Development will present a session on "Structural Issues in Steel Joists." The session will focus on alternative methods of reinforcing open-web steel joists as well as a look at the load-carrying capabilities of non-composite steel joists.

Of course, you can view the entire advance program at www.aisc.org/nascc (and you can register online!).

Hope to see you in Long Beach!

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