

editor's note



AS I WAS READING MY MAIL TODAY, I HAD TO CHUCKLE WHEN I READ A HEADLINE STATING, "GIANT SEALS HELP PROTECT ST. PETERSBURG FROM FLOODING." Coincidentally, my daughter and I had just had a discussion about homographs, so I recognized that a seal could be a sea mammal or an O-ring. It's great having kids in school; you learn new things or relearn those millions of facts that you've forgotten over time.

To be honest, when my daughter first used the term homograph, I was uncertain of its meaning. Fortunately, I could quickly boot up a computer, open Google, and type: "define: homograph" (quickly followed, of course, by "define: homonym" and "define: homophone"). The problem comes, however, in trying to figure out which source that Google refers you to is the most accurate. In the old days (say, five years ago) you'd pull out Webster's; today, you can look something up in Wikipedia, but you're never quite sure if the information is accurate.

So while I love the web as a resource, I still prefer more vetted sources if they're readily available. That's why I'm sometimes surprised by some of the things I read online. For example, one of my favorite e-mail lists is steel-detail@yahoogroups.com. This group of detailers regularly discusses current events in the detailing community and helps out with a wide range of issues. But every once in a while I'm surprised by a posting, such as this recent inquiry: "I have a situation where I have a TS 12 x 12 x 3/8 column and a TS beam 12 x 8 x 3/8 and the engineer has called out a moment connection per AISC. I cannot find an example in AISC 9th edition or HSS connection manual or AISC Volume 2 Connections. Does anyone have an idea where to look or an example? No loads are given." Moving beyond the outdated designations (TS) and references (9th edition, etc.), why not simply ask the AISC Steel Solutions Center? This free service quickly provides authoritative answers for anyone working on fabricated structural steel. You can email solutions@aisc.org, call 866.ASK.AISC, or visit the new *Modern Steel Construction* web site at www.modernsteel.com and click the ASK AISC link in the bottom right-hand corner (immediately below the answer to a current question).

Access to authoritative information is one of the big reasons people join associations such as AISC. And the dissemination of information is one of the reasons AISC publishes this magazine. In the past, our emphasis at MSC has been on project stories, though we've always tried publishing information-rich features such as Steel Interchange. Beginning in 2008, we're greatly expanding our number of regular features while moving some information out of the magazine and onto our web site.

New columns are focused on business issues, industry forecasting, and shop and field issues. We have also added "Topping Out" (a last-word from an interesting perspective) and "People to Know" (an article contributed by a significant person involved in design or construction).

We've also greatly changed the product section. Rather than focusing on specific categories, we're running just a few interesting new products each month. If you're looking for a specific type of product, you can find listings on the MSC web site in our searchable Product Directory.

Likewise, we're no longer printing steel availability listings. Instead, you can find current information on which shapes are being produced by which manufacturers by visiting www.modernsteel.com and clicking STEEL AVAILABILITY.

I hope you enjoy the changes! And as always, we'd love to hear your opinion. You can either e-mail us or post a comment in the reader feedback section on the new site (www.modernsteel.com/readerfeedback).

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