

## editor's note



**WAAAAAY BACK IN 1990, I ATTENDED A FULL-DAY SYMPOSIUM ON CONNECTION DESIGN RESPONSIBILITY.** The speakers were on-topic, well-spoken and thought-provoking—until one speaker made a remarkably sexist off-hand remark. In the 1950s, no one would have thought twice. But this was a new era and the audience was markedly aware of the inappropriateness of the comment, and it made almost everyone uncomfortable.

In my naivety, I was certain the world had changed since those days. After all, just a few months ago my youngest son and I were listening to the radio when a story came on about a young female math prodigy who had almost given up on math because her teachers didn't think a girl could take the advanced classes she had signed up for. Jason ruefully shook his head at the report and responded succinctly: "That's stupid. Doesn't everyone know girls are better than boys at math?" His experiences, whether with girls on his hockey team or girls in his advanced math classes, were uniformly positive.

So when some AISC staff suggested a session at next year's conference (March 22–24 in San Antonio) on workplace diversity, I scoffed and wondered if such a session wasn't more relevant to a conference in the 1990s than in 2017. Still, there was enough interest that we added the program the conference—and even made it a session plus a networking luncheon; see page 12 of the advance program (included in this issue and online at [www.aisc.org/nascc](http://www.aisc.org/nascc)) for more details. And just last week, the need for such a session was hammered home when we received an email discussing a potential speaker and the writer of the email offered, as one of the speaker's qualifications, that she was "so dang cute."

Of course, we've made a lot of other changes in the conference for next year, starting with the schedule. In order to provide additional education opportunities, seminars will start at 8:30

a.m. on Wednesday rather than our traditional afternoon opening, giving attendees the opportunity to earn a total of 17 PDHs plus an additional 4 PDHs if they attend the optional Tuesday afternoon Short Course.

Other major changes include:

- With so many seminars running concurrently, it can be tough to select one that's right for you. So we've created tracks (or groupings) to help you find the seminars you're most interested in—but we don't require you to preregister for specific tracks, and we encourage you to explore a wide range of seminars.
- Sometimes, one session just doesn't go deep enough into a particular subject. So this year, we're offering two special tracks that provide a deeper dive into their respective topics. SSPC: The Society for Protective Coatings, has developed a four-hour program to provide bridge designers with valuable information on specifying coatings. A second special track is a series of related seminars on legal issues impacting the design and construction of steel buildings and bridges.

Registration opens December 12 and the cost for members that week is just \$340—but the fee increases \$10 every week, so be sure to register early!

See you in San Antonio!

**SCOTT MELNICK**  
EDITOR

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