Concrescere

It was William Shakespeare in his play “Romeo and Juliet” who commented, “A rose by any other name would smell just as sweet.” Even though concrete has gone by many monikers over the centuries, would it not be just as durable if called by another of its historical names?

After my recent attendance at Committee Week, I once again was evaluating the unique and enduring values our company has received through membership in the ASCC. I reflected on my own growth and personal experience gained through my years of attending and participating with countless other members whom I admire. I was asked by one of these members while at Committee Week, “What brought me to join?” I didn’t have a ready answer.

I would like to respond to his question in this article. It occurred to me the answer is precisely the same as the definition of my one word title. A few years back we undertook to develop a business park where we expected to build the headquarters and operations center for our concrete and civil construction business. Since it was a development we had the chance to name the new business park. I wanted a name that would clearly represent the business on which we had built our company. I learned, with the help of Google, that the ancient Latin root word for concrete is “Concrescere.” [Kahn- Kre- Sayr] Its meaning was simply to “grow together.” That’s literally what happened when they mixed sand, stone and calcined lime or clay with water. The mixture would quickly harden or “grow together”. Thus a name for our business park was selected and after some time and effort on spelling and pronunciation, we are now proud to explain its meaning and relevance to our business mantra to visitors.

As to why I joined ASCC, “Growing Together” is my best explanation, as well as why many of my associates and I continue to attend and participate. ASCC members are the best people we could possibly associate with and learn from. The bonds formed with other members through our participation in ASCC bring us together for a common purpose. Both as individuals and as separate entities, our industry as a whole grows together and becomes stronger through the open sharing of knowledge and experience. As a bonus the enduring friendships and professional relationships I have been blessed to acquire are something I am very grateful for.

I challenge our members to grow together with others in the association. And seek to add additional ingredients to our mix, through expanded membership, to create an even greater ASCC for the next generation. Best wishes on a safe summer of prosperous work to all.

Grey matters!!

Executive Director’s Message

Don’t Wait to Prepare for OSHA’s New Silica Rule

Bev Garnant

As you probably know by now the effective date of OSHA’s New Silica Rule was recently moved back from June 23, 2017 to September 23, 2017. Shortly thereafter, with the confirmation of Labor Secretary Acosta, the Concrete Industry...
Making of a Profit Center

While contracting it was easy to tell that our crews enjoyed certain types of decorative concrete (stamped) much more than others (overlayments). What it took time to realize was that not only did the complaints go down when we stamped, but profitability skyrocketed. Rather than trying to maintain the tools and materials needed for the less productive offerings, we instead focused our money and marketing into the areas that reaped the most rewards. The results of a targeted niche versus a broad spectrum of offerings was quantifiable to our bottom line.

With the continuing growth of offerings in decorative concrete I understand the desire to offer a full menu of options. Sometimes, however, being the best at what you do results in your company becoming known for its high quality work. With that you must also make sure that you maintain a pricing level that reflects that you are superior. Sometimes having a waiting list for work creates a customer’s willingness to pay a little more.

As you choose your niche be sure it’s in line with your employees’ skills, along with what they take pleasure in doing. When the crew is happy and productive your customers will recognize it and want you back. Repetitive, quality work is one piece in the making of a profit center.

Decorative Aggregate Selection

Todd Scharich, Decorative Concrete Specialist

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Safety & Risk Management Council

Jason Anglin, Safety & Risk Management Council

Hose Whip

It was an early Saturday morning when the worker put his hands on a placement hose suspended from an outreached boom connected to a concrete pump truck. The concrete pump had just been primed and the pour crew was ready to place the first cubic yard of concrete. The crew expected concrete to begin pouring from the hose. Instead they heard the pump engine revving as its RPMs rose higher and higher. What happened next is what every pump operator and placement crew fears: the pump became plugged, allowing air to build up in the system, causing a high-pressure release of concrete.

As the air from the pump pushed the plug out of the system, the resulting pressure release shot concrete over 20 feet from the work area and caused the four-inch by 10-ft long section of hose to whip violently. The worker directing the placement hose was hit several times. The first hit shattered his face shield and broke his safety glasses. The second hit damaged his hard hat and knocked him to the ground.

Upon examination at an emergency medical facility, it was determined he required only first aid. The worker had been spared serious injury due to PPE, and because his training had taught him to recognize the signs of pressure build up in the pump system and what to do.

When the worker heard the concrete pump revving higher, he let go of the hose and immediately began backing away. When the end of the hose hit him, the force of the blows was reduced due to the increased distance from the work area. Training and good work practices helped reduce the severity of the incident but the injury could have been fully prevented.

During the incident investigation, it was discovered that the concrete pump had recently been through major repairs and maintenance. According to the pump operator, the unit had been prone to mechanical and operational issues since the repairs. This was not communicated to the pour crew until after the incident. If the placement crew had known about the potential pump issues, they could have adjusted their work practices to minimize exposure.
Additionally, the operator had not completed a full equipment inspection before starting the concrete pour. If he had, he might have noticed dried concrete on the underside of the grate covering the pump’s receiving hopper. (It was theorized that the dried concrete might have come loose and plugged the pump causing the incident.)

After the incident investigation had been conducted, the following corrective action was initiated:

1. The placement crew already used a pre-pour safety checklist. New items were added to the checklist requiring:
   a. The pump operator to review and sign the company’s checklist before the pour.
   b. The pump operator to list any potential mechanical issues with the pump that could affect the safety of the pour crew.
   c. The pour crew superintendent to review the operator’s equipment inspection prior to starting the concrete pour.

2. Whenever possible, the first yard of concrete from the pump will be placed directly into the concrete form with the pour crew a safe distance until the mixture is homogeneous and safer to handle. (The first yard of concrete being pumped is most prone to the introduction of plugs and air into the system.)

There are many ways to improve safety in our work environment. One of the biggest remains communication. While equipment, training and experience lessened the severity of this incident, better communication could have prevented it completely.

**Technical Committee Works Hard at ASCC Committee Days**

Bruce Suprenant, Technical Director

The hard working Technical Committee met in St. Louis on Wednesday, May 2 for 3 hours. Members received an update on “The VOICE” technical column and ASCC Troubleshooting Newsletters along with ACI activities of importance to the committee. At this meeting there were two major activities: (1) considering how to describe a depression and what tolerances might apply, and (2) considering specification requirements for concrete slabs to be polished.

Frank Salzano of CECO, a voting member of ACI-ASCC 117, and assisting that committee with developing tolerances for depressions, led a spirited discussion on what was a depression and what tolerances should be considered. Some of the items considered were:

- Tolerances for a depression at least ¾ inch deep.
- Specifier must state tolerances for depressions less than ¾ inch deep.
- Edge location tolerances should be based on what the depression was to be used for:
  - (1) thick-set tile or (2) prefabricated components.
- Depressions are better to be deeper than shallower.
- A reasonable tolerance on depth might be + 3/8 inch and – ¼ inch.
- Reasonable edge location tolerances might be ± 1 inch for thick-set tile and ± ½ inch for prefabricated components.

Discussion took place about using a size tolerance similar to that used for openings but the committee was not in favor of this.

Attendees considered specification requirements for concrete slabs to be polished. Factors considered were:

- F-numbers at 72 hours versus F-numbers at polishing.
- Importance of flatness versus levelness.
- The use of grate tampers or roller-bugs.
- The use or elimination of bump cutting.
- Surface density with machine and hand finishing.
- Effect of curling on polished appearance.
- Effect of the different grinds on each of the variables.

Since members of the Concrete Polishing Council (CPC) were also attending Committee Week, they were invited into the Technical Committee meeting for a 30-minute discussion. It was apparent after a great exchange of information that the discussion needed more time and both parties needed more input. It was agreed that the Technical Committee would meet with CPC members to discuss common issues in a 2 to 4 hour meeting at the Annual Conference in Phoenix in September. There was a feeling that general education was more important than a specification, and that will be discussed further in Phoenix.

If members have thoughts on tolerances for depressions or what concrete slabs need to be handed over to a polisher, email or call Bruce Suprenant at bsuprenant@ascconline.org or 800-331-0668.
Safety Week, May 1–5

Right: Employees of ASCC member Morley Builders show off their safety colors as part of the company’s Safety Week activities.

Both photos below: ASCC member Baker Concrete uses Safety Week as an opportunity for teachable moments.

HOT LINE QUESTIONS

CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION
800-331-0668
Bruce Suprenant–ascchotline@ascconline.org

SAFETY & INSURANCE
866-788-2722
srmc@ascconline.org

DECORATIVE CONCRETE
888-483-5288
Todd Scharich–dcchotline@ascconline.org

ASCC members have access to these toll-free numbers for assistance.

Webinars begin at 3:00 p.m. CST

June 14, 2017 How to Win a DCC Award Joe Primavera, SUNDEK and Karen Keyes, Colorado Hardscapes

Members no charge. Non-members $35; MC, Visa, Amex only. Call 866-788-2722 to register.