I admit I am a product of the country music I grew up with including one song I sing to myself occasionally, Jerry Lee Lewis’ rendition of “Middle Aged and Crazy.” Perhaps my staff thought I had fallen prey to living out those lyrics when I started a recent meeting with the proclamation that I had recently Fallen in Love Again! But it’s true, I have!

On a recent September weekend, I had the opportunity to work two full days with my site grading crew, preparing a concrete pour and fine grading parts of the site to be handed over to the landscaping subcontractor. I was working with my hands and operating equipment for the purpose of achieving the desired results. It felt good to be behind the control levers and in the operator’s seat again after so many years. Being out there setting grades and dealing with the obstacles that must be navigated to get the work done was really satisfying.

I also noticed very acutely multiple instances where breakdowns occurred between the work plan created by management or the design team, and the craftsmen who carry out their intent. It occurred to me just how many times during a typical day our skilled crew members must interpret this intent. Furthermore, they must carry out many more tasks that are nowhere to be seen on the plans or specifications. It literally happened over and over as I moved about the tasks; simple things that require constructive problem solving just to get past another trade’s work product. Or perhaps to sequence the next activity so it can be done efficiently, as opposed to some random sequence of unproductive activities. The need for clear and continuous communication between the crew leaders and the craftsmen was so apparent.

After two days in the field working side by side with my team, I found myself reacquainted with why I am in this business. I love the guys and gals who do this critical work. That’s right. I have “Fallen in Love with the Labor!” Since then I have been on a campaign around the Carolinas talking with business leaders and anyone who will listen. My message is simple. I love the folks who do the work! Labor is not a dirty word but rather a chore of affection for me. These people work through every situation you can imagine and do it with a smile most of the time. They overcome the obstacles and communicate with amazing nuance. They get it done despite the lack of clarity and comprehensiveness in the work plans; often communicating without speaking a word. Just a nod or wave of the hand can indicate what must be moved. And we who call the office our workplace dare to challenge why it wasn’t done quicker or with less cost, though we didn’t see or allow for those many tasks they undertake at a moment’s notice. These secondary activities were nowhere to be seen in our expertly prepared labor estimate.
What if, Contractors’ Day at ACI was Changed to Architects’/Owners’ Day?

Contractors’ Day at ACI conventions was established with the hope that local contractors would pay the one-day fee, attend the luncheon and some sessions featuring construction-focused speakers, and perhaps become an ACI member/future convention attendee. Frankly, this rarely happens. Those who attend the Contractors’ Lunch and sessions are those who are already at the convention and are ACI members.

Recent conversations at both ACI and ASCC have brought to the forefront the ongoing and escalating issue of the lack of communication between the designer and the contractor; problems such as the vast number of change orders, unclouded drawings, insufficient pre-construction meetings, no value on contractor’s input, unrealistic designs for budget, etc., etc.

ACI’s effort to bring architects to the organization via the Excellence in Concrete Awards program has not panned out. At the ACI Fall Convention last month, I suggested another route, changing Contractors’ Day to Architects’/Owners’ Day. This might include:

- Architects as speakers/panelists
- Sessions on topics of interest to architects (with CEU credits)
- Breakout sessions
- A pertinent hot topic
- An architect award for a structure in the convention city

I’m not suggesting this would be easy. But I am suggesting it’s worth a try. As a cheerleader for the contractor community I believe Contractors’ Day does little for contractors. I believe conversations with architects would benefit us more.

The first convention where we could possibly introduce this new concept is Spring 2020 in Chicago. Chicago seems like a perfect place, with a good number of architectural firms that call it home, and being a concrete-friendly city. I already have a number of raised hands who would like to assist with this effort. Please call me if you’d like to discuss further.

ASCC Welcomes Chris Sullivan

Bev Garnant has announced that Chris Sullivan has joined the ASCC staff as decorative concrete specialist (DCS). The DCS is a part-time position responsible for providing leadership, counsel and direction for the Decorative Concrete Council (DCC) members, in accordance with the mission and values of ASCC. The DCS is the staff face of the DCC, building strong relationships with DCC members and strengthening the organization’s effectiveness.

Sullivan is an expert in troubleshooting all facets of decorative concrete. He is part owner and vice president of sales and marketing for ChemSystems Inc., a manufacturer of decorative concrete admixtures. Sullivan is a public speaker on all topics dealing with decorative concrete, and the author of four books and hundreds of articles. He has been a presenter at the World of Concrete since 2005 and the Concrete Décor Show since 2009, as well as at dozens of other trade shows, symposiums and technical seminars. He was inducted into the Decorative Concrete Hall of Fame in 2015. He lives in Denver, Colorado.

Executive Director’s Message

Bev Garnant

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Get in Touch with the Constructability Column

Bruce Suprenant, Technical Director

ACI’s newest committee, 134, Constructability, has been providing contributions to a constructability column in ACI Concrete International. Members of 134 include Jim Cornell of JN Cornell Associates as chair, Bruce Suprenant, TAC contact, and Bev Garnant as a voting member, along with the following ASCC contractor members:

- Scott Anderson, Keystone Structural Concrete
- Oscar Antommattei, Kiewit Engineering Group
- Aron Csont, Barton Malow
- Ralph Jessop, Phaze Concrete
- Larry Karlson, PCL Constructors
- James Klinger, Conco
- Joseph McKewon, Charles Pankow Builders
- Michael Schneider, Baker Concrete Construction
Asbestos and Lead Based Paint Awareness Training

In construction, we often have the opportunity to work on older structures. These projects can offer unique opportunities to preserve and repurpose structures which may have historical significance. These projects however, have unique hazards, such as the potential for exposure to Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM), Presumed Asbestos Containing Material (PACM) and/or Lead Based Paint (LBP).

Employers must be aware of how to protect employees when working on older structures. Often there is a misconception that worker training is unnecessary if ACM or LBP won’t be disturbed as part of the scope of work. This can lead to hazardous material exposure and OSHA fines.

Training is necessary if workers have the potential to:

- Disturb asbestos; defined as activities that disrupt the matrix, crumble or pulverize, or generate visible debris from ACM or PACM.
- Be exposed to LBP; which OSHA defines as all work related to construction, alteration, or repair, including painting and decorating.

Many activities involved in the renovation of older structures have the potential to disturb hazardous materials. Abatement and demolition are obvious, but even resurfacing floors, sanding painted surfaces, or drilling holes can disturb hazardous material.

Cold Weather Concrete Sealing

As the temperatures start dropping, cold weather concrete practices come into play. What often gets missed with cold weather concreting is that sealers are impacted by dropping temperatures. In the concrete world cold weather is defined as a period when the average daily temperature falls below 40 F (4 C) for more than three successive days. In the sealer world the definition of cold weather starts at 50 F, and runs only a few hours.

Sealer manufacturers have set 50 F (10 C) as a universal minimum temperature for sealer application. This is a safe number, and, for the most part, if you seal at or above 50 F you should avoid cold weather sealer issues. Both air and surface temperatures play a role when applying sealers in cold weather, but surface temperature is usually more critical. Once applied, sealers undergo a chemical reaction that causes them to dry and form a film. Temperature, influenced by sun, wind, and time of day, plays a critical role in how fast, and to what degree, the drying process occurs. This is why monitoring weather conditions and looking at a thermometer should be mandatory when sealing in colder seasons. Other factors to consider when sealing in cold weather include humidity, dew point, and whether the temperature is rising or falling. As with most anything in nature, cold temperatures slow things down, sealer dry time included.

Every sealer has a minimum film forming temperature (MFFT). If the temperature is at or slightly below the MFFT, the chemistry of the sealer is affected, the reaction slows down, and you get partial to no film development. Classic signs that a sealer did not form properly due to cold temperatures and did not achieve MFFT, include a white powdery residue, similar to powdered sugar, on the surface. Another common indication of cold temperature related sealer failure is when white residue occurs in cracks, joints, or saw cuts. Moisture in joints, cracks and saw cuts reduces the temperature in those areas, leading to low temperature sealer failure.

When the temperatures start dropping take time to understand cold weather limitations of your sealer. Pay attention to what the weather is doing the day you are sealing, and the following 3 to 5 days as well. Using the old adage, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

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Many activities involved in the renovation of older structures have the potential to disturb hazardous materials. Abatement and demolition are obvious, but even resurfacing floors, sanding painted surfaces, or drilling holes can disturb hazardous material.
An initial step to assess the risk for ACM and LBP is to determine the age of the structure. If built before:

- 1980: It should be assumed to have ACM. However, ACM and PACM are still common in buildings constructed in the 1990s and in modern day materials such as roofing felts, pipeline wraps, gaskets, millboard and others due to a 1991 appeals court ruling that overturned a portion of the “Asbestos Ban and Phase Out” rule.
- 1978: the structure should be assumed to contain LBP. However, LBP may exist in younger buildings as well.

If ACM and/or LBP is present, all workers with the potential to disturb ACM or PACM, or be exposed to LBP, need to be trained to recognize the potential hazards and understand how to work safely.

To demonstrate their due diligence to safe-guard workers for activities which won’t disturb ACM or LBP, but have the potential to do so employers should:

- Request in writing a copy of all test reports for ACM and LBP from the building owner. Ensure the reports adequately address all materials associated with the scope of work.
- Conduct and review a hazardous materials survey before beginning work, to determine what protective measures are necessary.
- If ACM or PACM are present, provide a two-hour asbestos awareness training course to employees.
- If LBP is present provide awareness training to employees.

Further training is necessary if work activities require ACM, PACM or LBP to be disturbed. Training for these types of tasks must follow federal, state and local guidelines.

**Incident Investigation - Don’t Rush to Judgement**

Joe Whiteman, Director of Safety Services

Now days, most contractors perform some level of incident investigation after an accident, injury or close call. As a matter of fact OSHA recommends it, and provides a decent resource for conducting such investigations if you don’t have one within your organization. There is one common flaw though, that many succumb to when performing these types of investigations - rushing to judgement. Too often blame is quickly placed on the employee, or the obvious cause is simply stated.

Frequently, it’s more than just the fault of the employee or what is easily identified on the surface. For instance, take an incident where an employee causes property damage from accidentally backing a forklift into another piece of equipment. Could lack of training have played a part? Was there was no pre-task plan that might have identified a congested work area requiring more controls? How about whether the supervisor knew whether the employee was trained or not? Was it a scheduling issue where something had to be done with the lift and things were rushed and over looked? A multitude of factors need to be considered.

When you take the time to perform a thorough investigation and ask the right questions, you will make your way to the root cause, along with identifying contributing factors that need to be addressed. Once those contributing factors are identified and corrected, they should no longer pose a potential avenue to other more severe incidents. We should strive to perform a thorough investigation, identifying the contributing factors that unearth the true root cause. Remember the ultimate goal is to identify all areas where the behaviors, plans or processes, and/or management led to the incident or injury. Extra time on the front end can pay off with a better safety management system in place and ultimately a safer workplace for all employees.

**Wayne Brothers Recognized**

Congratulations to ASCC member Wayne Brothers, Davidson, NC, the recent recipient of the ENR Specialty Contractor of the Year award for the Southeast US. The contractor was nominated by industry owners/contractors/peers and the editors of the magazine.

Left: Michelle and Keith Wayne.

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

**Webinars begin at 3:00 p.m. CST**

Dec. 12, 2018  What You Can and Can’t Learn From Petrography  Kevin MacDonald, Beton Consulting Engineers, LLC

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