Executive Message

Catch Them Doing It Right!

I will always be grateful to CEMEX for sharing their Legacy Safety Leadership Program with ASCC. While tailoring their program to our company, I called two of the top safety performers at ASCC to ask their advice. Both said the same thing: First, safety lives in small conversations and second, some part of a leader’s style needs to include positive reinforcement—Catch people doing it right!

The first recommendation made immediate sense to me because we all have observed the principle of ‘that which is important to the boss becomes important to those around the boss’. This applies to all groups in a construction company. If safety is important to the owner, he or she will make it a primary talking point and it will be important to the foreman. If safety is important to the foreman, it will be a regular topic of discussion and it will be important to the crew.

The second recommendation of using positive reinforcement took me longer to grasp. Trained as an engineer, I can spot deficiencies in most any construction process without even trying. It’s not hard for me to visit a site and make a long list of things that warrant improvement and for most of my career I have been happy to share that list of shortcomings with those around me. At the same time, I have been far too stingy with compliments.

It took thinking about my youth to change my perspective on positive reinforcement at work. I can remember one of my football coaches being incredibly excited one time when he caught me doing something right. I remember very few other specifics about the many years I played football, but more than 30 years later, I remember distinctly the time someone I respected gave me genuine positive reinforcement.

Think about it in your own life and ask yourself ‘Am I taking full advantage of the benefits of giving positive reinforcement?’

Director’s Message

As I review the agendas for our upcoming board and committee meetings in Phoenix I’m so proud of both the volunteers and staff that work so hard to make ASCC such a strong, significant organization. They work on programs and materials that not only benefit members directly, but promote and advocate for concrete contractors throughout the industry.

Following is a list of some of the newest developments that will be discussed in more detail at next week’s meetings:

From the Technical Committee – On the suggestion and execution of ASCC technical director Bruce Suprenant, the American Concrete Institute (ACI) has formed a new board committee – Constructability. You mean there isn’t one? Sounds like a no-brainer doesn’t it. But now there is one thanks to Bruce. This committee will

Industry Calendar

**ACI Fall Convention**
Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, CA
October 15 – 19, 2017

**MIX Group Orientation**
Ruttura & Sons Construction Co., Inc., West Babylon, NY
November 9 – 11, 2017

**World of Concrete**
Las Vegas Convention Ctr., Las Vegas, NV
January 23 – 26, 2018

**2018 Concrete Executive Leadership Forum (CELF)**
Montage Deer Valley, Park City, UT
July 19 – 22, 2018

Welcome New Members

GT Polishing Systems, LLC, Otsego, MN
Industrial Restoration & Coatings, Inc., Logan, UT
Maven Group LLC, Chattanooga, TN
PlanGrid, San Francisco, CA
Sunbelt Rentals, Inc., Fort Mill, SC
South East Concrete LLC, Birmingham, AL
lead and fill the role in developing information through a Guide document and providing education through technical sessions and special publications.

At ACI’s Fall Convention in October a **full day symposium honoring ASCC concrete construction specialist Ward R. Malisch** will feature 24 influential speakers addressing various aspects of concrete construction, honoring Ward’s career at ASCC and ACI.

**Membership Committee** – As of some recent date we have **737 members**, 123 more than the same time last year and about 200 more than same time 2015. According to our Member Matrix, which tracks the involvement of members in ASCC activities, **120 members have added one or more new activity since this past May**. The MIX Group program continues to evolve and as members converge on Phoenix for the Conference, Gary Burleson is hosting a **MIX Orientation there to launch the first all-female group**.

Are you aware that the **Decorative Concrete Council (DCC) and Manufacturers’ Advisory Council (MAC)** just completed a very successful community project at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center? These Councils have come together on several recent projects to provide materials and labor for some wonderful installations for deserving folks.

This summer the **DCC also debuted a new strategic plan** focused on branding, teaching DCC contractors best business practices, and assuring that all DCC members are fully engaged in the organization. The **Safety & Risk Management Council (SRMC) has a new strategic plan** with goals that include a **full time staff person devoted to safety**, measuring ASCC member safety numbers vs. the industry, developing an “ASCC Certified Safe” program and utilizing MIX Groups to influence the nearly 100 companies that participate.

At the same time the SRMC has been diligent in making sure the members have been informed about **OSHA’s New Crystalline Silica Rule, set to go into effect September 23**. Check the website for articles, a management plan and a PPT for employees.

The **Emerging Leaders Committee** is putting the final touches on a new **Gaining Strength Award** that will recognize up and coming ASCC members.

The **NRMCA/ASCC Paving Committee** is putting together a **comprehensive toolkit with pieces to help contractors with design, promotion and installation of parking lots** and other paving projects.

Thanks to the associate members of our **MAC**, 7 of whom have stepped up as **new sponsors of the Annual Conference**: Faro, Laticrete, Fibermesh, Metzger/McGuire, Plangrid, Wagman Metal Products, and Ductilerete.

The **Concrete Polishing Council (CPC)** has developed its **first three Position Statements**: Slab Protection by Others; Slip Resistance of Polished Concrete; and Coordinating the Concrete Contractor and Polishing Contractor Subcontracts and is about to make dramatic changes to the Appearance and Aggregate Exposure Charts.

ASCC members don’t spend much time sitting on their hands. They are of a mind to help and recognize their fellow members. Please be sure to thank these folks as you see them in Phoenix and let us know where you would like to participate.

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**Decorative Concrete Council**

**Teacher, Mentor, Friend, Leader; Unforgettable**

My first interaction with concrete was in a high school shop class. Our teacher, John T Smith, would call his not so young friend Corky Jorden, and a dozen of us “knuckleheads” from class, and we would set out on our concrete adventures. An over supported, formed garage floor and screed pipe supported by 2x4 stakes were the benchmarks. Most students were given yard rakes to muck with. I’m not sure if anyone knew the difference between a mag and a trowel. We were given muck boots and the freedom to cuss a little, if needed. Some of us would sneak a dip of tobacco. We thought the teacher didn’t know.

My inspiration into the trades, John T was a short to mid-sized man who demanded our attention and earned our respect. He was a staple in the school system and had taught most of our parents and siblings. When I was a little boy I looked forward to attending his class after seeing my brothers’ projects. They made everything from bird houses to entertainment centers.

We had to put in our time in the shop before we were allowed to load the minibus full of tools and go to outside projects. I can recite many of his sayings when we would smash our finger with a hammer, or screw something up; none of which can be included in this article.

I didn’t realize how much of an inspiration John T was to me. I’m understanding that now, as tears roll down my cheeks as I type this. It was an honor as a young man to get asked by John T to work with him in the summer on outside projects. When I got into business as an excavation contractor (guy with a backhoe) I did not intend on concrete becoming my career. However, I was asked by a customer if we could pour concrete. The entrepreneur in me answered “yes”. Heck, we had poured a couple of projects in John
T’s class so I knew I was ready to jump in. The first driveway I poured was on a 2x4 supported screed rail. I got a bull float without an adjustable knuckle just like the one in shop class. And that was the beginning of my career in concrete.

We lost John T this June. John T believed in me. Every time I overbuild a project, put too many nails in a dog house or smash my finger, John T is on my mind. He was a legend in my eyes. Unfortunately, I never told him how much he influenced me and I regret that more each day.

If you have a “John T” in your life tell him how much you appreciate his friendship, leadership, mentorship and anything else he willingly offers. I’ll never get that chance. Remember that you may be “John T” to a young individual, whether you intend to or not. Intentional inspiration sure beats unintentional inspiration. Take a minute and build it into someone. The industry needs it and the emotional reward for each of you will be unforgettable. Just like “John T”.

**Fall for Education**

When it comes to education I like to share a story about ASCC member C.J. Salzano. Year after year, C.J. wins Decorative Concrete Council awards for his stamped concrete. However, the reason I am talking about him is that year after year he also shows up in my Stamped Concrete Basics class at World of Concrete, a class he could easily be instructing instead of attending. I’m sure there are many other things he could do in Las Vegas, instead he continues to educate himself, even repeating classes he has seen before. The point is that education should never end. There will always be something new, changes to be aware of, or maybe just one little tidbit of information that can make a difference in your projects. This fall brings a multitude of educational opportunities for decorative concrete and polished concrete contractors.

September 14-17 - Our **ASCC Annual Conference** features a mix of technical, business, and safety courses that can help improve your company. Beyond the education, this conference is known for creating long lasting peer-to-peer relationships that provide knowledge sharing and common business development. This also marks the first conference where members of the Concrete Polishing Council will be joining us. Be sure to reach out and welcome this dynamic group into the ASCC family.

October 5-7 – The **Concrete Polishing & Staining Conference and Expo** is in Pittsburgh this year. Ryan Olson and Concrete Contractor have again put together a great program for concrete polishers. CPC members will be instructing 11 of the 19 course offerings that cover nearly every aspect of a polishing business.

November 6-10 – The **Concrete Décor Show** has moved back east, to the Innisbrook Resort just outside of Tampa. Bent Mikkelsen is finalizing the seminar lineup as we speak, but my preview of it shows a strong lineup of training tracts over four days. Each day will focus on a different aspect of the decorative business, allowing attendees to focus on their specialty and improve their skills.

**Safety & Risk Management Council**

**Utility Knife Safety**

The utility knife is one hand tool that demands your respect over many others in the workplace because it can literally cut you to the bone in an instant. Hand injuries are the most prevalent injuries in construction and the improper use of utility knives is a major contributing factor.

Utility knives are used to cut strapping, zip ties, sheathing, membranes, chamfer and multiple other media and products. But one wrong move and they can do serious damage.

Many accidents involving utility knives occur for the following reasons:

- Pulling the knife towards you instead of away from you
- Working with a dull blade
- Trying to cut more than the knife can handle
- Improperly storing the knife with the blade extended
- Failing to wear personal protective equipment
- Neglecting to inspect the tool before use

The following are safety precautions to keep in mind when using utility knives:

- Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes in case a blade breaks.
- Wear cut resistant gloves (at least Level 3) to protect your hands.
- Always use a sharp blade. They are safer than a dull blade.
- Keep extremities out of the cutting path. (line of fire)
- Don’t apply too much pressure on the blade.
- Follow manufacturer’s instructions when changing blades.
- Don’t use utility knives to pry objects loose.
- Dispose of dull or broken blades in a puncture-resistant container.
- Use chamfer cutters.
- Use self-retracting blade knives.
When rain falls on fresh concrete, concrete contractors get blamed for not checking the weather conditions and not planning the concrete placement to avoid rain. But tell that to concrete contractors in Seattle or Miami. The rainy season in Seattle includes six months, October through March, with 15 days of rain or more, plus two months that have about 20 days of rain. Miami has a rainy season from June through October with rain averaging more than 15 days a month. Avoiding rain is easy – but that costs time and money, which then makes avoiding rain not so easy.

Concrete pavements and many flatwork pours are open to the rain. Yes, concrete contractors know about using plastic to protect fresh concrete from the rain, removing rain water from fresh concrete dragging a hose or using a squeegee, and yes, they know not to intermix the rain water into the concrete or surface finish. Every concrete contractor in business for more than five years has at least one rain story to tell.

Concrete contractors understand that remedial work may be needed for a rain-damaged slab; however, most are not prepared for owners who insist that the concrete be removed and replaced. In some areas, such as Seattle and Miami, the replacement slab may have to be placed in the rain! Thus, engineers and owners in Seattle and Miami who have to deal with rain-damaged slabs and their repair, are less likely to order remove and replace. They understand the issue of rain and the schedule constraints.

However, the industry has not done a good job at sharing the information about the effect of rain on fresh concrete and the repair options. I’ve found and cited the following literature on rain-damaged concrete to help when advising contractors who face the problem.

**Rain References**

American Concrete Pavement Association, “How to Handle Rained-on Concrete Pavements”, Concrete Pavement Research & Technology, R & T Update, April 2003.

Seegebrecht, George W., “When it Rains, it Can Pour...on Flatwork Projects”, *Concrete International*, American Concrete Institute, August 2012.


These three articles discuss the use of grinding or removing a thin surface layer to restore most rain-damaged slabs. Some engineers and owners question the durability of rain-damaged slabs that have a thin layer removed. But the American Concrete Pavement Association (ACPA) indicates that diamond grinding has been successfully used to repair rain-damaged surfaces exposed to winter conditions and many years of truck traffic.

ASCC’s Technical Committee will be looking into this issue. Please let me know of any articles, reports or repairs that you have used successfully, or unsuccessfully, on rain-damaged slabs. And of course, we always love to listen to everyone’s rain story!

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**HOT LINE QUESTIONS**

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

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