

The other night I had the pleasure and honor of dining with the jurors of the AISC architectural awards competition (the winners of which will be presented in next month's issue). Listening to a group of architects talking amongst themselves is quite different than listening to other groups of design or construction professionals.

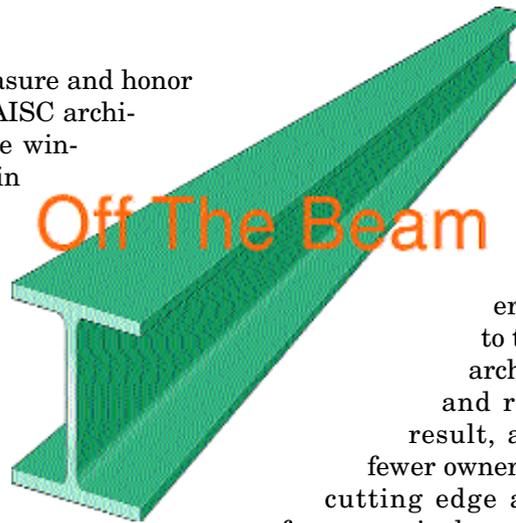
Fabricators tend to talk about projects they're either working on or have recently finished. They'll talk about difficult details and unusual connections.

Structural engineers tend to talk about concepts. The designs are often not project specific, but instead apply to a wide range of projects.

Architects are different. Perhaps its because their work is readily visible, not just to other architects, but also to the general public. Or perhaps it's that they're taught to think in terms of the historical and artistic context of a design. But regardless of the reason, architects are one of the few groups willing to publicly critique both their own work and the designs of their peers. And since the dinner was in Chicago, it was only natural that the conversation should focus on Chicago architecture.

So, all in all, it was an enjoyable couple of hours. Each of the architects had a slightly different idea of good design, but most of them agreed on which buildings they liked, and which they did not.

Towards the end of the evening, though, the conversation took a remarkable turn. It seems that the American Institute of Architects (AIA) will



soon be embarking on a television advertising campaign touting the benefits of architects and good architecture. And around the table there was near-universal agreement that building owners and the general public tend to take architects for granted, that architects don't receive the respect and recognition they deserve. The result, apparently, is that fewer and fewer owners are willing to take chances on cutting edge architecture—and fewer and fewer genuinely great structures are being built.

I have to admit, though, that I was taken aback slightly by this line of thought. Just an hour earlier, one of the out of town visitors mentioned how impressed she was that on a sightseeing walk around the city, several times passersby would notice her looking at a particular building, stop and comment on the history of the building—including telling her who the architect was—and then suggest other similarly grand structures to visit. So when the conversation turned to how the general public takes architects for granted, I asked her if she could name the structural engineer of any of the buildings she had seen that day. And except for a few obvious buildings by Fazlur Kahn, she couldn't.

Maybe the advertising campaign shouldn't focus on good architecture. Maybe what's really needed is a campaign about good design. It's not just the architects that need to explore new and innovative concepts.

Scott Melnick
Editor & Publisher

Who's Who at MSC	Advertising in MSC	AISC Officers
<p>Editor & Publisher: Scott Melnick ph: 312/670-5407 email: melnick@aiscmail.com</p> <p>Exec. Editor: Patrick M. Newman, P.E. ph: 312/670-5417 email: newman@aiscmail.com</p> <p>Sr. Tech. Advisor: Charlie Carter, P.E. ph: 312/670-5414 email: carter@aiscmail.com</p> <p>Sr. Tech. Advisor: Jacques Cattan ph: 312/670-5430 email: cattan@aiscmail.com</p> <p>Editorial Offices: One East Wacker Dr., Suite 3100 Chicago, IL 60601-2001 fax: 312/670-5403</p>	<p>Account Manager: John Byrne ph: 847/699-6049 fax: 847/699-8681 email: jabber10@ix.netcom.com</p> <p>Advertising Offices: 2400 E. Devon Ave., Suite 267 Des Plaines, IL 60018</p> <p>To receive a media kit, call, fax or email</p> <p>John Byrne</p> <p>or view advertising information on AISC's home page on the World Wide Web at:</p> <p>http://www.aiscweb.com</p>	<p>Chairman: Robert E. Owen 1st Vice Chairman: Robert D. Freeland 2nd Vice Chairman: Robert G. Abramson Treasurer: Jerry Milligan Secr. & Gen. Counsel: David Ratterman</p> <p>President: H. Louis Gurthet, P.E.</p> <p>Vice President: Morris Caminer (Finance & Administration)</p> <p>Vice President: Nestor Iwankiw, P.E. (Engineering & Research)</p> <p>American Institute of Steel Construction, Inc. One East Wacker Dr., Suite 3100 Chicago, IL 60601-2001 ph: 312/670-2400 fax: 312/670-5403</p>