



## Notes from the Editor

Scott L. Melnick

As I sat in the bleachers of a local high school watching my eldest niece's graduation ceremony, I found myself getting more and more irritated. No, it wasn't the noise from the planes flying overhead. And it wasn't the graduating seniors—they seemed to be regarding the ceremonies with the proper pomp and circumstance. Rather, it was the incessant ringing of cell phones. The final straw was the woman two rows back who not only didn't have the courtesy to turn off her ringer, but felt the need to engage in a loud conversation during the commencement address!

And it's clearly not an isolated event. Meetings, seminars and even religious ceremonies are constantly disrupted by those who believe their lives are too important to be out of touch for even an hour. However, there is a potential solution—and it's one that's being implemented at next year's North American Steel Construction Conference. The idea capitalizes on our love of free market forces. Simply put, if people are so important they can't have their phones off for an hour, they should pay for the privilege. So anytime a phone rings during a seminar at next year's NASCC, the owner of the phone will be expected to donate \$20 to the AISC Education Foundation. I'll still be irritated by the ringing, but at least I'll know it's for a good cause.

Cell phones aren't the only example of the deterioration in public behavior of late, though. I'm shocked by the lack of civility on some internet chat rooms. It seems that anytime someone expresses an opinion, or asks a less-than-doctorate-

level question, at least one or two people feel the need to attack the "speaker." And they're not attacking the ideas presented by the speaker—they often resort to personal attacks. The internet should be a boon to public discourse; I hope a few ignorant individuals don't turn too many people off from this valuable medium.

Speaking of the internet and chatting, AISC and Modern Steel Construction recently completed their first public "chat." The kick-off "speaker" was Tom Murray, one of the industry's leading experts on floor vibration. It was quite an interesting hour. Questions ranged from queries about specific projects to a discussion about why older design criteria (such as that used in many software programs) are inadequate for vibration checks today. If you're interested in reading an edited transcript of the online chat, visit [www.aisc.org](http://www.aisc.org).

Chats are typically held every-other Tuesday at 2 p.m. central time. Upcoming topics include: welding, bolting and the Code of Standard Practice. For a schedule of upcoming chats, visit [www.aisc.org](http://www.aisc.org) or subscribe to AISC's bi-monthly email newsletter at:

[www.aisc.org/about.asp?ar=23&co=254](http://www.aisc.org/about.asp?ar=23&co=254)

If you have any suggested topics or speakers for future chats, please drop me a note at [melnick@blacksquirrel.net](mailto:melnick@blacksquirrel.net).

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