

# editor's note



**IN A RECENT BLOG, ADRIAN SEGAR WROTE ABOUT ENJOYING MEETING PEOPLE WHEN HE TRAVELS**—yes, he's the proverbial stranger in the seat next to you on a plane who strikes up a conversation.

I tend to fall into that same category, only for me it's not just on airplanes. I might be in line at the grocery store and waiting to pick my daughter up from one of her many extracurricular activities. Recently I struck up a brief conversation with a gentleman who turned out to be the parent of one of my daughter's close friends. In recounting the conversation to my wife, I reported on what he did for a living, how he had spent five years in Toronto (her home town), how many kids he had and how they got along, and how we both mildly complained about essentially being chauffeurs for our kids and that we reminisced about the freedom and lack of scheduling we enjoyed as kids. My wife in turn expressed surprise about the amount of information I obtained in such a short period of time. But I wasn't surprised; in our ever more connected world, there's still no substitution for face-to-face communication.

Segar, who is an expert on developing top-notch conferences, makes the point that a similar level of interaction occurs among conference attendees—but he adds the caveat that there's the added pleasure of potentially seeing your new "friends" again. "I find it strange, yet enjoyable, to meet people once a year and expand my connection on each occasion in unforeseen ways," he states.

The same principles hold true for experiences. I can watch a travel video about Paris, I can even go online and view a live webcam at the Eiffel Tower, and I can surf the web to find fascinating information about the construction of that monumental structure. But there's no substitute for actually being there, for climbing the steps to the top, hearing the sounds of the tourists around you, and for looking out over that fabulous city just as the sun is setting. Or

think about any sports event. Your view is going to be much better on a 50-in. high-definition television, your seats are certainly more comfortable, and you get the insight of a professional commentator. But who wouldn't rather be at the ballpark?

Last year, AISC initiated an event called SteelDay. Held the last Friday in September, this educational and networking event is an opportunity to get up close and personal with steel. Events are held throughout the country at fabrication shops, steel mills, galvanizing facilities, and service centers. Most of the events have educational components (and many offer food and drink). As Richard Miles from Sparks Engineering in Round Rock, Texas, reported: "SteelDay gives you an appreciation for what goes into your design—and the efforts to recycle/be environmentally friendly." And as Dave Haugland from AHJ Engineers in Boise, Idaho, said: "It's a good chance to interact with the design and construction players in a non-project, relaxed atmosphere while learning about their part of the project."

This year we're expecting more than 200 SteelDay events. You can find out about the one closest to you (and yes, there are events expected in every state) by visiting [www.steelday.org](http://www.steelday.org).

Plan to attend a SteelDay event. See firsthand what goes into your steel project. Meet some new people. It's even better than striking up a conversation with a stranger on a plane.

**SCOTT MELNICK**  
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