EARLIER THIS YEAR, MY DAUGHTER, JULIA, PARTICIPATED IN A WRITING WORKSHOP FOR YOUNG PLAYRIGHTS.

The workshop leader was a nationally known writer and a lecturer at Northwestern University. (As a sidenote, Julia had previously met the playwright. Philip Dawkins is known for writing for both kids and adults, and Julia had previously performed in the world premiere of two of his plays as well as assisted in the production of a third.)

The end result of the writing is that some of the plays are selected to be read during a “Young Playwrights” performance at Julia’s high school. Selecting the plays to be read seems simple; you simply choose the best plays. But if you speak with the artistic director, you realize a lot more goes into the decisions. Which have the potential for improvement? Which are too long—or too short? Which are most likely to resonate with the audience?

Similarly, choosing which articles run in Modern Steel Construction is equally involved.

As with the Young Playwrights, the number-one criteria is whether the subject is of interest to the viewers (or, in our case, readers). What do we look for?

➤ Does the project have special requirements that needed to be met?
➤ Did the designers use an innovative solution to a common problem?
➤ Would our readers learn something about design or construction by reading about the project?

Other factors we consider are the quality of the images (everyone likes cool pictures) and whether the article meets specific needs. For example, in February we’ll be looking at constructability issues, in June we’ll look at exemplary bridges and next December we’ll focus on international projects.

And we’re always looking for cutting-edge stories. Does the project use a new structural system or does it show an advancement in BIM? Maybe the fabrication costs were reduced because of new and modern equipment. We’re always looking for a hook to make the story more interesting.

If you’re interested in submitting a story, you can get details by visiting www.modernsteel.com/submissions. And if you have more questions, just drop an email to me or Geoff Weisenberger at weisenberger@modernsteel.com.

But in short, ask yourself what was the most interesting fact about the project. And then let us know.

Who knows? Your story may be almost as brilliant as Julia’s play!