

editor's note



OVER AND OVER AGAIN DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS, I'VE SAT DOWN, PUT FINGERS TO KEYBOARD AND STARTED THIS COLUMN. But each time, I stopped and deleted my efforts.

The problem was that I had two distinct beginnings, each leading in a completely different direction.

In one column, I began by writing about a neat device I had recently purchased. The Spiralizer is a simple kitchen tool that allows me to convert zucchini and other vegetables into long spirals (kind of like spaghetti). The first dish I tried with my new toy was a delicious lentil and tomato stew over garlic sauteed "zoodles." From there, my goal was to segue into a discussion of neat tools, materials and designs for steel construction—most of which you can see firsthand at NASCC: The Steel Conference. (For a description of recent innovative structural systems, some of which I had planned to highlight in this column, check out AISC's Steel Solutions Center brochure available by visiting www.aisc.org/myproject and click on "innovative structural steel systems" in the right-hand column.) And, of course, I would use this as an opportunity to promote the Steel Conference and remind you to register for this fantastic event (March 25-27 in Nashville; register by visiting www.aisc.org/nascc).

But every time I started typing, my mind kept drifting back to something I had read in some comments by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), who was quoting *New York Times* reporter Bob Herbert's book *Losing our Way*. I just couldn't stop thinking about this second column and the quote: "Study after study has shown that rebuilding the infrastructure is the quickest way to put larger

numbers of people back to work, and the return for each dollar invested in infrastructure renewal is significantly greater than all other investments in the economy."

The quote rang true and obvious—and is certainly no surprise to anyone reading this. So why aren't we rebuilding our infrastructure? The American Society of Civil Engineers annually issues a report railing against the declining state of America's infrastructure from bridges to transmission lines to sewers (see www.infrastructurereportcard.org). But if we all know about it, if everyone agrees, why is it so hard to pass a transportation act funding infrastructure work?

Obviously, as my deadline neared for filing this column, I was still undecided on which direction to go. Fortunately, I don't have to choose; I can use both. But honestly, as great as the Steel Conference is (and if you've never been to one, ask someone who has!), it's even more important to properly fund our nation's infrastructure. I urge everyone to take every opportunity to contact their elected officials and insist that we do a better job of funding infrastructure work.

See you in Nashville!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Melnick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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