A FUN FACEBOOK FEATURE IS “ON THIS DAY,” WHICH SHOWS YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS SOME OF YOUR MEMORIES (SUCH AS PICTURES AND POSTS) FROM THE PAST. Most of the memories are just a year or two old, but occasionally one will pop up from five or even seven years ago.

Not surprisingly, many of my memories are pictures of my children. And I’m often surprised when I see these old pictures by how little my kids were and how grown up they are now. For me, the changes have been so gradual that I don’t always notice them until I see these old pictures.

I was reminded recently that it’s not just people who change over time. Renae Gurthet, who has been in charge of the exhibit hall at NASCC: The Steel Conference for the past decade, recently sent me a note about how much the conference had grown in that time frame. While to me the change was a gradual evolution, the numbers tell a different story. In the past decade attendance and exhibitors have more than doubled. Last year we had more than 4,500 visitors (mostly structural engineers and steel fabricators but also erectors, detailers, educators, students, exhibitors and contractors).

The Steel Conference has also changed in tone. If you go back a quarter-century or more, it was a sleepy event with a strong academic tilt. Now, it’s a vibrant three days where you can hear about “Elasto-Plastic Stress States and Reduced Flexural Stiffness of Steel Beam Columns” but also learn about “Proposals that Win,” “Advances in Welding Automation” and “Advances in Steel Connection Analysis.”

You can participate in seminars with up-and-coming professors at leading universities and with some of the best-known structural engineers in the world. The conference is all about learning and networking. It’s a great place to meet your colleagues, your customers, your clients and future friends (amazingly, I even know one since-married couple who first met at a Steel Conference).

You’ll learn about the latest design information and you’ll see the latest advances in both fabrication equipment and structural design software.

The Steel Conference, which will be held in Orlando, April 13–15, offers more than 120 fabulous sessions, including the World Steel Bridge Symposium. And there are more than 200 amazing exhibitors. You can see steel plate cut as fast as butter or try your hand at a welding simulator. Whether you’re looking for software or bolts, if it’s related to structural steel design and construction, it’s at the Steel Conference.

If you’ve never attended a Steel Conference, ask around. It’s a stimulating three days that will teach you and invigorate you. Our goal is for every attendee to come away with ideas they can put into practice immediately.

Visit www.aisc.org/nascc to see the full program. And make sure you register early. When registration opens on January 4, AISC members can register for just $340; the fee increases $10 every week.

I hope to see you in Orlando!