

“THE WEB”

ITC NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2003

My wish for you all in the last edition was that your plans and predictions have and will continue to be successfully achieved.

Hopefully the grass has not grown under your feet during the winter months, because with the advent of spring and the growing season fast approaching, the grass could soon be ankle deep and to use a golfing analogy, it could take some “hacking out”.

An appropriately lovely quotation I came across says “Progress is the Law of Heaven. Tomorrow be stronger, braver, more loving than you have been to-day. This Law of Progress gives a meaning, a purpose to life.”

Applying this kind of principle to life could improve our own and our society’s lifestyle.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This important event in the Institute’s annual calendar has come and gone and once again a poor turnout of members was recorded.

The Western Cape have developed a slogan “What are you doing for your Institute – not what is the Institute doing for you.”

Something worthwhile thinking about.

The A.G.M. brought about the retirement as chairman of Manny Ferreira after successfully completing his 2 year stint. His practical experience, energy and time are truly appreciated, particularly in view of his busy lifestyle. His input has been of great benefit to this industry.

The new chairman of the board is Stewart Murray and we wish him a successful term. There is no doubt that we will benefit from his vast experience.

REGIONS

-

1. **Western Cape**

The Western Cape Region continues to lead the way in terms of setting up local standards and stringently enforcing them. The strength lies in the fact that most of the fabricators attend the regional meetings and thereby debate the industry rights and wrongs, and create standards and procedures which they believe are pertinent.

Added to this is the strong base of registered roof erectors and the combined strength of all role players viz. Fabricators, Erectors, Inspectors, Systems, Engineers which has brought about healthy but still competitive business rivalry.

An infringement of local rules brings swift disciplinary action.

Regional Chairman Pierre de Villiers also ends his term of office in the near future and it is fair to say that his vision and input have contributed in no small way to the successful maintenance of professional standards by Pierre and his loyal committee and of course Regional co-ordinator Graham Butler.

It is always dangerous to single out any individual however this opportunity must not pass without mentioning the incredible efforts ploughed into the welfare of the Institute by Graham Retief, over the past umpteen years.

He is talking of retirement some time in the near future – circa December 2003. We will go into details when the event arrives, but in the meantime we must continue to benefit from his wisdom, experience and (with respect) his animated touches of emotion.

2. **Kwa Zulu Natal**

The regional committee, under the leadership of Chairman Morris Allnatt, have appointed a part time co-ordinator in the ample form of Colin Armstrong.

Colin has considerable experience in our industry and he will be able to plough his professional expertise into the co-ordinating of regional activities, as well I am sure, of relieving Morris of the Administrative activities which he has so diligently handled from his business office.

3. **South/Eastern Cape**

Ian Keevey has successfully continued to hold together the strings of this geographically far spread region. (East London to Mossel Bay and inland is a long way).

Despite adversity and some political set-backs Ian has remained steadfast in his loyal support and this small tribute is documented as a token of gratitude and respect.

INSPECTIONS

The Regulation A19 process of roof inspection is gaining acceptance by more local authorities.

Talks to Building Control Officers who have not previously enforced the law, have provoked an awareness of bad practice in their areas, which includes the poor (in fact shocking) state of manufacture and erection of site made trusses. This will inevitably promote the use of factory made nail-plated trusses.

Roof Inspectors are still reporting inferior quality layout drawings on sites, as well as lack of details – especially for girders. These require full plating and timber details.

It is imperative that a highly responsible industry performs in a professional and responsible manner.

I am aware that the Engineering Council is promoting an investigation into the activities of the Nail-Plated Timber Roof Truss Industry.

It is therefore essential that we get every aspect of our house in order, in the event of us being subjected to some form of scrutiny.

Certificate of Competence audits on fabricators will be strictly carried out. There are several who have audits outstanding – these are currently being followed up and the relevant audits carried out.

MULTI MEMBER GIRDER RESEARCH

This all important project has almost reached finalization.

At a meeting of our Timber Engineering Advisory Committee held in July, Prof. Walter Burdzik presented results of his findings and explained the basis of his research.

At a subsequent meeting of the 3 System Engineers and an independent engineer, views were expressed and a final outcome will be reached in the next few weeks after final discussion between the engineers and their systems.

In the meantime the following items **MUST BE APPLIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STANDARD DETAILS:**

1. Proper nailing and bolting together of all Multi-member girders.
2. All truss hangers and cleats must be bolted through all members of the supporting girders not just nailed to the face of the chord of the first girder.
3. The anti-torsional strap detail is an essential component of the connections.

PROMOTION AND ADVERTISING

The attractive glossy poster “WOULD YOU LIKE A SAFE ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD” has been widely distributed and placed on notice boards in Municipal offices, Fabricator

offices and the like. It is approved by most Local Authorities and the Johannesburg Metro asked for 15 posters more than the bundle we gave them.

The poster has also been advertised in magazines, not the least of which is the S.A. Builder. There has been a very positive response to the poster which hopefully will bear fruit for you the members.

Another innovation is the Bakkie door/bumper sticker “HOLDER OF A CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE ISSUED BY THE ITC.”

This also has been very well received.

If you have a valid certificate of competence a sticker will be attached to this newsletter and if you require more, please contact Amanda at the ITC office who will gladly send them.

STRUCTURAL S.A. PINE

News filtering through appears more positive and it would seem that the strengthening of the Rand has had a restrictive influence on the exporting of S.A. Pine, thereby alleviating the critical shortages which were being experienced a few months ago.

We are still however receiving reports from SABS (Global Conformity Services) inspectors of timber in plants without SABS grade marks apparently imported from Zimbabwe.

Also still cases of timber sections being ripped in order to fulfill design requirements.

I re-iterate – this is not only illegal, it is a potentially dangerous practice and completely unprofessional, unless the timber is re-graded by an accredited person.

It would be pertinent at this point to mention that SATAS has now received formal accreditation and the company can now legally grade and mark timber and wooden products. The principals of SATAS are Abe Stears, Piet Posthumus and Danny Goodall (all formerly of SABS) and they can be called upon for re-grading purposes if so required.

The AGM promoted a discussion on finished size of timber when PAR quality was required by Architects for truss finishes.

It seems that fabricators are planing 38mm thick timber to well below SANS 1783-2 specification tolerance parameters. Once again an illegal practice. Attached is a copy of Table 5 from the specification for your benefit.

S.A. NATIONAL STANDARDS MARK (SANS 1900) FOR TRUSSES

I recently visited the only truss plant in the country which has the right to apply the SANS mark on the trusses produced.

Eugene Kelbrick the licensee is justifiably proud of his well organized and structured truss plant.

He is willing to assist others wanting to apply for the SANS 1900 mark with the benefits of his experience and relevant documentation and he firmly believes that the promotion of higher standards in the industry will highlight the shortcomings of the “Weaker Links.”

I am aware of at least 2 other fabricators presently gearing up for accreditation and any other fabricators who wish to take advantage of Eugene’s generous offer need only contact this office and we will put them in touch.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Your Board of Directors recently proposed a CODE OF CONDUCT to be signed by all members of the Institute. The proposed document was presented at the AGM and unanimously adopted. Attached is a copy for your edification.

PRODUCT LIABILITY

Engineers signing off roof structures have stated that they cannot be held responsible for latent defects in trusses and over which they have no control.

The question arises as to the fabricator’s responsibility in the event of roof failure and relevant claims surrounding latent defects existing in the trusses at the time of delivery to site.

This highlights the need for Product Liability policies to be retained by the fabricators and to be fully paid up. Another mark for professionalism in the industry. Do you have such insurance?

GENERAL

There is a move afoot to revert to the traditional RED marking of the SANS marking on structural S.A. Pine. The change to the BLACK ink mark was at the request of a large mill, and it would seem that they have never used the specific machine for which it was intended. The Black mark appears to have created confusion and the RED grade marks will be welcomed.

Contact has finally been established with St. Anthony’s College in Boksburg and their desire to train students in correct bracing and erection methods is most encouraging.

They are training learners in terms of registered Unit Standards, however there are apparent shortcomings and these will be pursued.

Very beneficial presentations on bracing and erection of timber roofs were made to over 50 building inspectors from the Johannesburg Metro.

The audience included the Chief Building Control Officer and the deputy engineer.

The understanding and application of the A19 process is apparent and close bonds of co-operation have been forged.

In closing I just have to share the following industry related e-mail I received from a friend (?)

A young family moved into a house next door to a vacant lot. One day a construction crew turned up to start building a house on the empty lot. The young family's 5-year-old daughter naturally took an interest in all the activity going on next door and started talking with the workers. She hung around and eventually the construction crew, all of them gems-in-the-rough, more or less adopted her as a king of project mascot.

They chatted with her, let her sit with them while they had coffee and lunch breaks, and gave her little jobs to do here and there to make her feel important. At the end of the first week they even presented her with a pay envelope containing one dollar.

The little girl took this home to her mother who said all the appropriate words of admiration and suggested that they take the dollar pay she had received to the bank the next day to start a savings account.

When they got to the bank the teller was equally impressed with the story and asked the little girl how she had come by her very own pay check at such a young age. The little girl proudly replied. "I worked all last week with a crew building a house."

"My goodness gracious," said the teller, "and will you be working on the house again this week, too?" The little girl replied "Yes I will be working there next week provided that the Sons of Bitches from the housing depot send the boarding which isn't worth a shit anyway!"