

# COLUMN

STEEL DETAILERS INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Newsletter Fall 2003



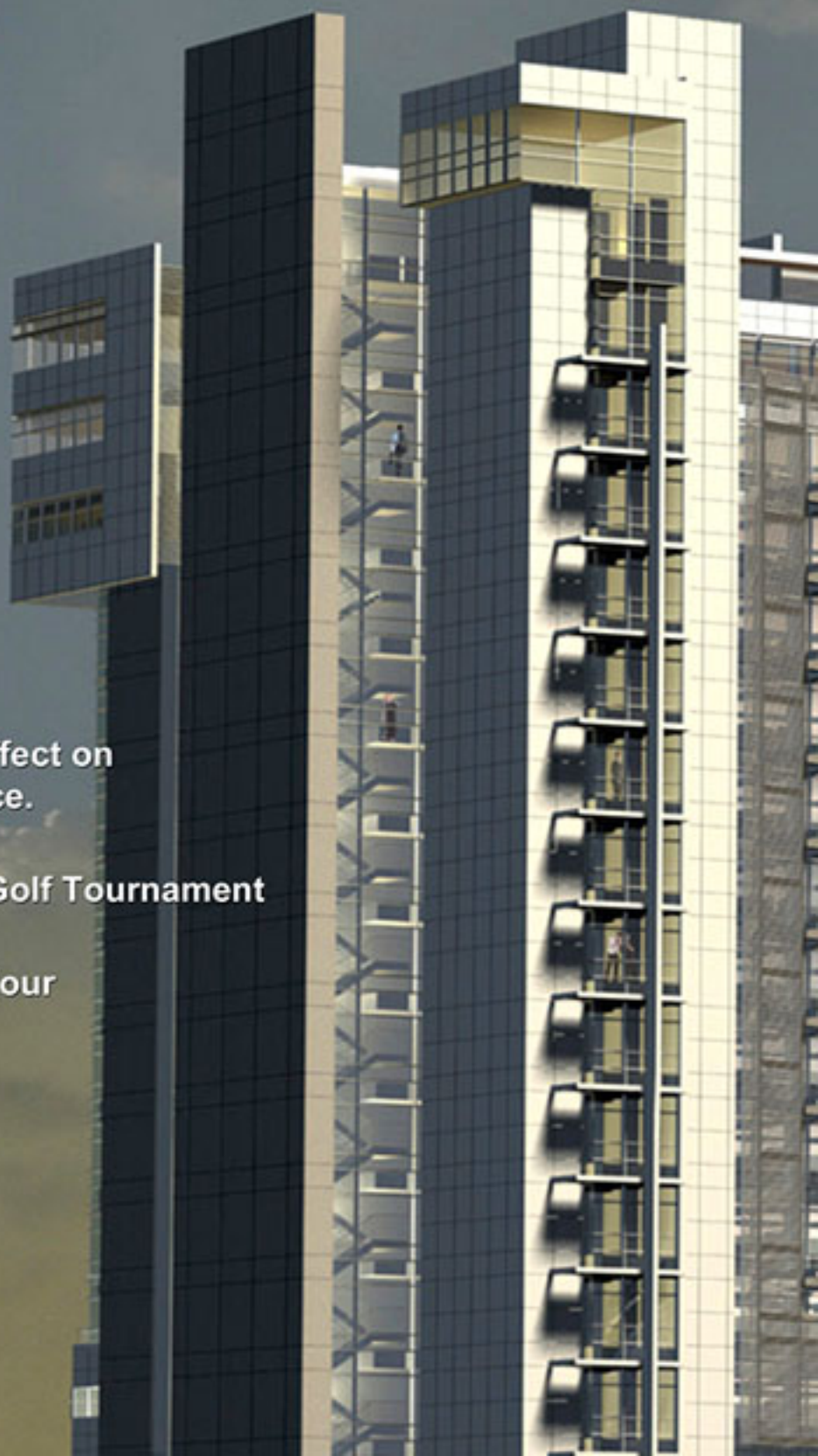
inside:

The Internet and its effect on  
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## The Internet and its effect on the global market

Jack Dhaliwal, RSD - SDIBC, Secretary / Treasurer



The Internet and its effect on the global market place are two realities that are changing the way trade and business is being conducted. The area of information technologies has been the greatest benefactor of the Internet. Since 1992 the world has become a much smaller place and the internet has grown from being an exclusive system of university based servers that were adapted for electronic e-mail by a limited few

students and professors, to what it is today - a highly developed global information exchange system affecting every aspect of modern life. During the years 1992 to 2002, tremendous input of resources spurred exponential increase in software development around the world. Also, as the market and demand for software and hardware increased, cost of equipment dropped dramatically. In fact today technology has enabled lap top computers to be many times more powerful at a fraction of the cost of older technology. The capabilities of the newer technologies in turn have allowed software to develop exponentially in functionality, with prices being more and more affordable.

How have these recent changes affected the steel detailing industries in North America? We will try to analyze and understand this question, which has been on many detailers' minds for the past three years in North America. Lately we have become increasingly aware of detailing shops in countries such as China, India, Pakistan, Chile, Romania and the Philippines, offering detailing services. Typically, differences in economic conditions allow these offshore firms to offer detailing services at substantially lower rates than North America, Europe or Australia. However, we all realize that detailing is a highly precise industry and although costs are a major concern, even more so is accuracy.

The setting up of offshore detailing shops is becoming a new method of business and although recently an increase in these types of ventures has taken place, it is not a new idea. It has been tried in the past by North American firms. However, the first attempts were done prior to the development of the Internet. Initial offshore experiments were dependent upon the use of telephones, fax machines and document courier companies. Drawings had to be physically transported back and forth between North American and offshore offices; this process could take several days alone. Communication costs were also a factor to consider. Now we can call practically anywhere in the world very affordably, though this was quite costly ten to fifteen years ago. Another consideration was the time required to setup, manage, check and back-check jobs due to the physical transportation of design and detail drawings. Many of these initial tryouts realized that other unforeseen expenses quickly offset any cost savings attained through cheaper salary expenses. (cont. next page)



Architectural rendering of Candraft's current project.

## Promote Your Professional Certification



Enhancing the recognition of qualified practitioners who are certified in steel detailing is an integral part of SDIBC's mission. In addition to the efforts of SDIBC, registrants in ASTTBC's Steel Detailing Certification Program can also assist in promoting the profession and the professional... you. The primary means available to you include... your professional designation, stamp (RSDs only), and using

the ASTTBC and/or SDIBC logos.

The professional designation indicates you meet the standards for certification... you've earned the title and right to use one of the approved designations... RSD, CSD or ASD. Use it with pride, knowing you 'have what it takes' and are recognized for your knowledge and abilities. Include your professional designation after your name on stationery, references to yourself in technical documents, papers and articles, or with your signature.



The RSD stamp is available to Registered Steel Detailers in good standing with ASTTBC and can be used on any preliminary, draft or final documents which have been prepared by you or under your immediate supervision.

The stamp is a quality assurance symbol, indicative that a responsible and accountable professional has completed the work. You may affix your stamp to documents, subject to any legal or other limitations; guidelines on use are available through ASTTBC.

Individuals 'registered with' or 'certified by' ASTTBC are encouraged to promote their affiliation with the Association and membership in SDIBC. The ASTTBC and/or SDIBC logos may be incorporated into stationery, promotional and biographical materials used expressly by you in the course of your work... it's a great way to promote your certification as a qualified steel detailer. Prior permission to use the logo(s) is required... contact ASTTBC for 'Terms & Conditions of Use'.

**Note...** Employers wishing to promote the certified steel detailers employed by their company are encouraged to do so. Such reference by employers should be descriptive in nature, as use of the ASTTBC and/or SDIBC logos and their derivatives is restricted to registrants in good standing with ASTTBC.

## Steel fact By Héctor Medina

Today, Steel is considered the first choice of material for structures among architects and engineers. Low cost, strength, durability, design, flexibility, adaptability, recyclability; these qualities have prompted the advantage of steel over other materials in the building construction industry.

## Burnaby Incinerator Tour

Have you ever wondered what happens to all that garbage? Join us on our tour of the Burnaby Incinerator on November 22 and you can find out. These tours are limited to 15 people each and the first group is scheduled to start at 10am. Those wishing to join this tour should book by November 10<sup>th</sup>. This should be an interesting event that will increase your awareness of this world class and environmentally safe, energy production facility in your back yard.

Contact our Tour organizer at [tours@sdibc.net](mailto:tours@sdibc.net) or phone Brian @ 604-637-2998 ext.8886

## Our New Name

We have a winner for our "name the newsletter" contest. A young lady has had her suggestion chosen from a field of over 50 names. "The SDIBC **COLUMN**" has become the name of our newsletter. Thanks to all of you who submitted names. All of your contributions were appreciated.

RECOGNITION OF STEEL DETAILERS



## 2003 Steel Detailer's Golf Tournament

This year's golf tournament was a resounding success. Ten foursomes of golfers battled the sweltering heat and rock hard fairways in a record setting 5 ½ hours. Most teams got off to a great start, with birdies on the first couple of holes, but then succumbing to the torturous heat on the back nine. "Four" was heard loud and often. Fortunately there were no injuries other than the occasional blister. Dehydration was avoided thanks to the frequent visits from the golf club's first aid attendant with her cart of thirst quenchers.

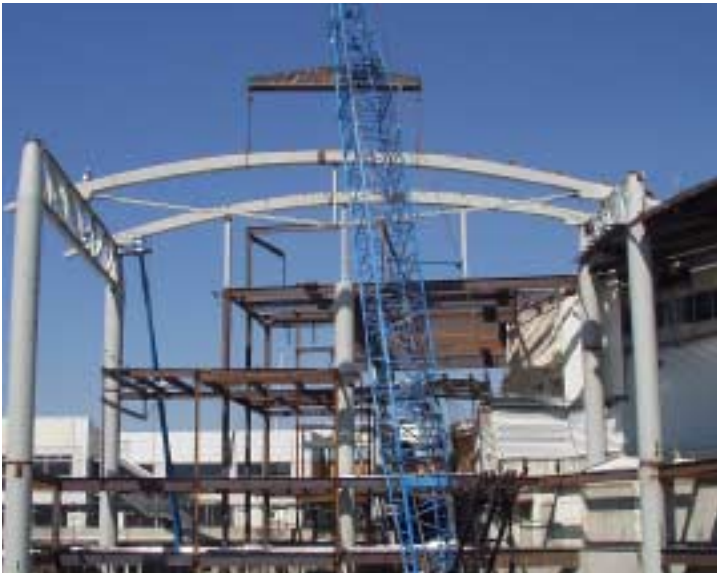


Hats of to the winning foursome of: (left to right) Tony G (Independent), Rob B ( Skyline), Ed B (Apax) and Bob P ( N.C. Engineering) with a very respectable 6 under, two strokes ahead of their closest rival.

Many thanks to Steve Carter for all of his hard work in organizing the Detailer's Tournament.

## Annual General Meeting

SDIBC will be having its Annual General Meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. This will be held at 5:30 at the Executive Plaza Hotel on North Road, in Coquitlam. A guest speaker is planned prior to the election of a new executive. Light refreshments will be served and a cash bar will be available. Please plan on attending.



48" pipe columns at Seatac Airport expansion.

Another fact quickly realized was that often drawings ended up being re-checked and scrubbed by the North American office due to quality control and schedule concerns. Also, during the pioneer days of offshore detailing companies, there was practically no available detailing software and even AutoCAD was in its infancy. This meant that the initial offshore detailing offices were totally dependent upon manual drafting with pencil to paper. This resulted in problems with drawing consistency and English translation of detailing drawing notes and mark call-outs. Today we have dramatically improved communication capabilities, with the recent launch of new satellites and cellular phone technologies. It now costs pennies per minute as opposed to dollars per minute only a decade ago, to telephone countries such as China, India and the Philippines. Now, the use of specialized detailing and drafting software allows drawings and structural models to be sent in electronic format. The Internet has enabled file transfer protocol servers to instantaneously send vast amounts of information back and forth between offices based on different continents. We can now simultaneously resolve problems over the Internet via net meeting, actually jointly working on the same model in real time. And finally, the new detailing software has allowed for the standardization of drawings and is no longer dependent upon penmanship and English skills. In most cases text errors can be easily spell checked and corrected once the models have been reviewed at the North American end. Preemptively jobs can be prepared and set up in North America with the correct piece marking to eliminate errors on the offshore office side.

When considering the above, we can reasonably conclude that globalization of steel detailing is a reality. How then will this new reality affect North American detailers? One valid concern is the impact on the value of detailing contracts and hourly detailing rates. The tremendous differences in the exchange rates of developing countries and living standards in these countries allow for offshore firms to charge USD \$10.00 to \$18.00 per hour, i.e., one quarter to one third of the North American hourly rates. Even at these rates, offshore firms are able to make a profit due to the vast difference in wages paid to detailers between the countries.

The trend is truly global, with countries such as the Philippines, China, India, Chile, Mexico, Romania, and more recently the emerging eastern block countries, as well as South American firms, offering detailing services.

Presently, work tends to flow from North America to the offshore firms. Rarely do offshore firms send work back to North American companies. The reason for this one-way flow is mainly due to the fact that countries such as India and China generally use concrete construction methods and material, while steel framing is mainly restricted to long span bridges, electrical transmission towers and the heavy industrial and manufacturing sectors.

Although China has embarked upon infrastructure expansion due to its relatively recent economic reforms, other countries such as India have yet to make significant changes to their internal infrastructures. Also third world countries have tended to put much of their resources in education over the past twenty years, which has resulted in a large population of educated professionals who cannot find employment in their native countries. These factors have contributed to detailing firms hiring technically trained staff at very low wages. So for the foreseeable future, North American detailing firms will not procure any significant amount of work in the countries being discussed, but rather will tend to send North American work overseas as a way of lowering detailing costs. However, as the economies of developing nations grow, eventually North American firms will have opportunities to garner work from these countries, and be competitive with the regional offices.

During these changing times, many concerns are economy based. However, as steel detailers we can help ourselves by focusing on the quality of steel detailing drawings and maintaining high standards of training and education. This is why organizations such as the Steel Detailers Institute of British Columbia (SDIBC) have more relevancy than ever before. With globalization of steel detailing organizations such as SDIBC guarantee a high standard of product to the steel industry by being a part of the team of engineering professionals. Members of the SDIBC are reviewed and granted registration by their own peers. SDIBC detailers are required to meet certain levels of education, training and most importantly experience. North American detailers can help secure their future in the global economy by joining the SDIBC.

# About SDIBC



## Our Mission...

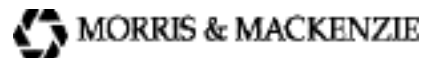
The **STEEL DETAILERS INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA** was created in response to the steel industry's need for quality, experienced detailers with proven levels of expertise. Our goal is to help develop, uphold and maintain proper standards for steel detailers in their relationship to other members of the construction industry. We encourage individual steel detailers to apply for certification by ASTTBC under the Steel Detailing Certification Program.

## Some benefits and advantages of becoming a member of SDIBC

1. Posting your skills and expertise on a Canada - wide technical employment network (CTEN)
2. Purchasing Insurance (home, health & dental) especially if you're self-employed.
3. Phone saving on purchasing quality digital or digital/analog phones. Several no contract plans. (CITYFONE)
4. Discounts on new cars. Decide what make and model of new car and your list of options, then contact (QUINELLA) for their best price.



## ASTTBC member service affinity partners



If you wish to receive further updates of our newsletter, please fill out the information below and mail to:

**Steel Detailers Institute of British Columbia (SDIBC)**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_