



## **My New Year's Wish - Hoping for a Transition from a Pandemic to an Endemic**

**Bill Bramschreiber, president**

In 46 BC Julius Caesar instituted the Julian calendar to better synchronize the months of the year with the equinoxes of the sun. This calendar closely resembles the Gregorian calendar that most countries around the world use today. Caesar instituted January 1 as the first day of the year to honor Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, whose two faces allowed him to look back into the past and forward into the future. New Year's Day is the world's most celebrated holiday; and as well as celebrating, many of us also take time to evaluate our lives and plan new courses of action to better our lives.

When I reflect on 2021, most of my thoughts are dominated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to affect so much of my life. We are currently riding the Omicron surge in this country, our sixth COVID-19 wave so far. This pandemic has created both a public health crisis and an economic crisis here for the last two plus years. Global supply chain and worker shortage issues remain. For much of last year the Fed was calling the resulting inflation we were experiencing, transitory. They are now saying it is no longer transitory. For many of us, our backlog of work has been drawn down, and the uncertainty about the future remains. This has created increased competition for the fewer opportunities and resulted in lower fees for many contractors.

My hope for 2022 is that COVID-19 will transition as an infectious disease from a pandemic to an endemic. That the surges and waves become less and less frequent and serious, and that COVID-19 becomes like the common cold and flu. Over time these both became endemic viral infections frequently encountered by all of us, and we have just become used to them. When this transition finally happens with COVID-19 is still the big unknown. Many virologists, health organizations and governments can see this happening in the near future, while others believe it may take much longer. Regardless of the actual timing, to me, COVID-19 transitioning to an endemic is what will finally take away the global uncertainty about the future. And, will get us past the malicious combo of COVID-19 disruptions, higher inflation, and shortages we are experiencing. My optimistic wish for 2022 is that we do indeed transition to an endemic this year, and that we all do whatever we can to help make this happen.

I want to encourage everyone to explore the new and greatly improved ASCC website ([ascconline.org](https://ascconline.org)). Our own Rachel Zuellig led this effort, with significant input and feedback from Aaron Gregory and the rest of the Membership Committee.

Thank you for your continued support of ASCC in our Mission of "Enhancing the Capabilities of Those Who Build with Concrete." We have shown through these last two pandemic years that through collaboration and communicating best practices we can help change construction for the better. Everyone have a safe and prosperous 2022.

## ***Executive Director's Message***

### **Jobs Well Done** **Bev Garnant**

I'd like to recognize our staff for jobs well done last year. While we were in the pandemic, coming out of the pandemic, and then back at it in 2021, staff continued to perform at a very high level.

Our Technical Division – yes, it's just two people, however they operate as if it were 22 – continued to answer hundreds of hotline calls and email forum questions, many of which go into great depth. On the side, Bruce and Jim reviewed and submitted comments on documents from 13 ACI committees. They also had four major articles published in *Concrete International* and four Q & A columns based on questions and replies submitted to our email forum. Bruce was very involved in drafting our new company certification program and Jim writes a heavy-duty column for The Voice each month. In June they launched our new Constructability Committee, a group I believe will have a significant impact for our members.

Newly hired, Erica Stone fell right into our two annual events, CELF and the Annual Conference, that we were extremely fortunate to hold in person. She did a masterful job of quickly familiarizing herself with both events and ASCC, and came off without a hitch.

Joe Whiteman continues to dazzle our members with his comprehensive knowledge of all thing's concrete construction safety, helping contractors every day via the safety hotline. He manages the Safety Council, is very involved in our Hard Hats to Helmets initiative and started a monthly safety roundtable which has generated excellent participation and idea exchange. We also launched a quarterly safety-only newsletter in 2021, the contents of which are his responsibility. And our first Safety Summit took place in November, a credit to ASCC's focus on safety and Joe's position.

We are very fortunate to have Chris Sullivan, our decorative concrete specialist, with years of experience in the industry and a vast network of associates. It is such an advantage to have someone you trust in a position like this; to know that every inquiry to the hotline or article he writes is on point, and sharing much needed, solid advice to our decorative contractors.

Mary has an unflagging way of making sure we don't spend money we don't have and that everything adds up at the end of the month. She also, however, must serve as our HR department, den mother, disciplinarian, caretaker, confessor, etc., etc. She's the best!

If you've seen our new website, that was all Rachel. A new website is a huge undertaking that requires immense patience, determination, and sound IT skills. Rachel braved her way through it, while simultaneously performing multiple other tasks, to deliver a handsome site that modernizes our appearance and functionality.

Jill continued to do a great job overseeing the Polishing Council, while adding the Membership and Emerging Leaders Committees to her resume as well. She adeptly handles many of the day-to-day requests we receive from members which is the backbone of our service.

And last but certainly not least, Sue, who had to come up to speed in a new job in the work-from-home pandemic period, manages to take care of members' and staff's needs alike, all while keeping a smile on her face and sounding happy to be talking to us all. The office cannot run without Sue to keep it altogether, and that she does quite well.

I know that you know we have a great group of people – as you are often want to comment. We thank you for your appreciation and for all you do for us as well. Happy New Year!

Bev

P.S. Every now and then they let me push a button or two.





From left to right: Rachel Zuellig Lynch, learning officer; Mary Anderson, accounting; Sue Snelson, office manager; Jill Zeller, member services; Erica Stone, manager of meetings and events.

## Concrete Construction Specialist

### Estimating for Concrete Contractors.... #3 in a series Jim Klinger

**Full disclosure:** To oversimplify enormously, philosopher Blaise Pascal approached the issue of whether or not there was a deity by saying that, if we took a leap of faith and assumed there was, and we were wrong, then we would lose nothing but a few hours of wasted prayer and adoration. If we were right, then we would win heaven. If we assumed there was no deity, and we were right, we have neither lost nor gained anything; but if we were wrong, we have lost our eternal souls. Therefore, Pascal suggested, the only logical and intelligent course of action is to assume there is a deity.

*From this bit of narrow reasoning came the concept of “Pascal’s Bet”, which refers to acting as though something exists...however slim the odds...when its failure to exist will not harm you, but its existence could affect you greatly*

In the last two episodes of the ASCC VOICE, the Technical Division offered suggested ways to mitigate unsavory financial problems that can usually be prevented by a few careful keystrokes applied whilst preparing a bid proposal. In this episode, we present typical terminology used by veteran concrete estimators. Some of it may seem a bit colorful, but we are all adults here.

<u>Estimate Level</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Plus Tolerance</u>	<u>Minus Tolerance</u>
1	"Cocktail Napkin"	50%	30%
2	Schematic	30%	15%
3	Design Development	20%	10%
4	75% CD	15%	5%
5	90% CD	5%	5%
6	Bid Day	perfect	perfect
7	Post-bid options	n/a	n/a

**Estimate Levels:** The table above has been morphed from several construction and process industry sources over the years; mostly from ASTM E2616-11, “Standard Classification for Cost Estimate Classification System”. Estimate levels range from Level 1 (“cocktail napkin”) to Level 7, which only kicks in after project award-when pricing needs to be prepared for alternates and last-minute add-ons. The plus and minus tolerances are loosely based on ASTM E2616, with the exception of Levels 6 and 7. Our thinking is that the estimate better be dead-nuts perfect at Level 6, and at Level 7 anyone could see plain as day that your price is right on the money.

**ROM Estimate:** Rough Order of Magnitude, numbers prepared by others.

**ROM Estimate:** Refined Order of Magnitude, numbers prepared by you.

**SWAG Number:** Scientific, wild-assed guess. Google it.



**PIDOOMA Estimate:** Pulled it directly out of my ass estimate. Google it.

**Ballpark Estimate:** A number no worse than most, but probably better than some.

**Should Cost Estimate:** See SWAG number, above.

**Greenfield Estimate:** Price based on pristine, untouched land. Just a green field.

**Brownfield Estimate:** Land has prior issues, possibly contaminated.

**Upset Fee:** Any higher than this and the owner will be upset.

**Scary Low Estimate:** Your price is Pascal's Bet writ large...and lost.

## **Upside-down Stud Rails** **Jim Klinger**

Imagine, if you will, the following scenario. You are scheduled to start installing rebar and PT for an elevated concrete slab tomorrow. The plywood deck has been swept clean, and the MEP crew has moved out of your way. You get a call from your stud rail (also known as PSR, or punching shear resistor) supplier, who informs you that supply chain issues are preventing him from delivering the product to your jobsite on time. Or...

Imagine, if you will, the following scenario. You have scheduled a 500-plus CY placement for the day after tomorrow. The rebar and PT has been completed and is awaiting inspection. You get a call over the radio from your field foreman that your crew has forgotten to install the stud rails required at just about every column on the floor.

In both cases, all may not be lost, and the placements might not have to be cancelled. As it turns out, the "stud" part of the stud rail is needed to prevent the slab cracking that typically occurs during a punching shear failure. The stud itself does not care if it is right-side up or up-side down. The "rail" part of the stud rail is merely a convenient means of spacing the studs. In other words, it is entirely acceptable for the stud rails to be installed after the rebar and PT have been installed, just as long as the spacing and placement tolerances are kept within the bounds indicated on the construction documents.

Reference: Concrete Q&A, ACI Concrete International, January 2022.

## **Concrete Polishing Council**

### **I Promise Not to Write About Supply Chain Issues Ever Again... Except This One Time** **Scott Metzger, council director**

I know I wrote a lot about supply chain issues in 2021, and I promise not to repeat this year. But as we are at the very start of 2022, I thought it might be worthwhile to give a bit of insight as to what to expect this coming year, and to find out if there were lessons learned in 2021 that could be instructional. So, I dusted off my old reporter's notebook and reached out to some CPC manufacturers to get their perspectives on 2021 and predictions for 2022. As you can imagine, while the challenges varied, nobody I spoke with went through last year unaffected by supply chain constraints, leading many to change the way they do business.

On the equipment side, Clif Rawlings, technical director for SASE, indicated their main constraint was getting chip-based circuit boards and other miscellaneous electrical components. Completely understandable, as even auto makers have been hamstrung by this issue. More interesting to me is that this shortage has been severe enough that it led SASE not to launch some new equipment at the upcoming World of Concrete. "I hate showing something that I can't promise to deliver on a timely basis," added Marcus Turek, SASE's vice president of sales. "Without clearer visibility on supply we just don't feel comfortable launching right now."

Carla Nickodemus, business development and product manager for BORIDE Engineered Abrasives indicated their supply chain headaches come and go, but don't seem to be going away.

"The best way we have found to insulate ourselves somewhat against shortages is to buy in larger volumes and keep larger inventories. Lead times are always longer, and we have found a need for constant communication with our vendors to ensure we get our supplies." Carla and Marcus both indicated that as U.S. based manufacturers relying largely on U.S. made components, they ended up in a slightly better spot than others who primarily import machines, tooling or other components. "Everyone knows how hard it is to get things to, and then out of the ports," remarked Marcus. "The few small components we do have to source from overseas have been a nightmare."

To that point, Carla indicated that BORIDE had an opportunity to develop some new products to replace components from overseas that were hard to obtain. "Making all our products here has proven to be a real advantage," she said. America 1, Overseas Suppliers 0!

Kevin Sigourney, vp of sales and marketing at Prosoco, said they dealt with "significant" supply chain problems in 2021. "From raw materials to boxes to containers to price changes and force majeure-you name it." Kevin noted that one big change was a breakdown in communication with some of their longtime suppliers. "We always got order confirmations, shipping updates, etc. in short order. In 2021 all that changed. Sometimes we got no confirmation, no updates on backorders or delivery times. Sometimes we expected orders to deliver and got nothing. And sometimes we would get two to three times what we ordered but were never told it was coming. It was crazy." While some things improved towards year's end, Kevin indicated that 2022 was not starting out all that differently. "It still has to be constantly managed. But on a positive note, with very few exceptions, we were mostly able to keep up with orders in 2021. There were times though where we were right on the edge. One less drum or one more week's delay, and we would have been out," he said.

As a chemical manufacturer, my experience was very similar to Kevin's. While doing my best to communicate and forecast expected production, too often I found myself getting burned by "promised" delivery dates for raw materials that would then slide week to week. At times we went more than four weeks missing a single component that prevented production of one or more products. Coming into 2022, things have improved dramatically. Today, nearly all products are back online in full capacity. But this was only possible by sourcing products from multiple vendors many months ago and committing to very aggressive stocking orders. While we still have issues with materials landing in ports, when shipments do arrive they are sufficient to produce a three month supply of material rather than the three weeks once typical. In speaking with other manufacturers, keeping aggressive inventories of product truly does seem to be the best solution.

We have all learned a lot in 2021 about the pitfalls of a "just in time" inventory approach. I am routinely talking with customers about their forecasted needs 60-90 days out, rather than 24 hours out as in the past. As so many manufacturers noted, managing this supply chain crisis is all about communication.

As I close, I am reminded that I once promised some tips for contractors to ensure more timely deliveries. As I just noted, communicating and ordering materials 60-90 days out is very helpful. Another key behavior to avoid is waiting to "bundle" orders. In the face of the price increases so many manufacturers are enduring, rarely will you save money by purchasing in larger volumes. Additionally, when allocating batch runs of chemicals, it is far easier to find six pails or a pallet of material to fill a backlogged order vs. sending six pails against a 100 pail order. At least in the near term, my advice is order early and often...

## ***Decorative Concrete Council***

### **Stains on Concrete**

**Chris Sullivan, decorative concrete specialist**

I have received multiple inquiries over the last years regarding "stains" on concrete and how to remove them. Before removing a stain we want to try and determine the makeup. It will be either inorganic (non-carbon based) or organic (carbon-based). The other determination that helps is if it is water or oil-based. While determining this is not always possible, even an educated guess can save time and provide a better cleaning option. I found a great website called "[The Chemistry of Stain Removal](#)" that breaks down stains into basic categories and provides solutions for cleaning.

One question I get more often has to do with rust or mineral stains. These are created when

anything metallic (rebar or metal wire) rests on the concrete. More often than not they come from fertilizer overspray. In either case the result is an orange or brown stain that is hard to remove. They are inorganic and reactive, which means they have formed a chemical bond with the concrete, and soap and water will not remove them. The stain is coming from the same active ingredients found in acid stain, which are used to permanently color the concrete.

Since these are inorganic and reactive we need to “unwind” the chemical reaction to remove these stains. In this case that involves reducing the pH. That is achieved by using a mild acid. I start with a clear white vinegar diluted 50:50 with water, increasing the strength as needed. In stubborn cases you may need to dilute muriatic acid, starting at 50:1 with water. Keep in mind that you may need to apply the acid solution on the stain multiple times, scrub lightly, and then rinse. Always test a small area to ensure you are getting the results you desire. Lastly, acid may etch or change the profile of the concrete in the areas you clean, leaving a new “clean spot” that is as noticeable as the stain itself. Cleaning the entire slab or a larger area may be necessary to blend the cleaned area.

I encourage you to utilize all the technical hotlines provided by ASCC. These are a valuable benefit available to members only. You can reach the ASCC / DCC Decorative Hotline via phone at 303.570.7374 or by email at [csullivan@asconline.org](mailto:csullivan@asconline.org).

### **COVID Fatigue**

**Jeff Eiswerth, DCC council director**

Fellow ASCC members, you may already be tired of hearing it, but here's to a Happy New Year! I wish you, your family, colleagues, and company nothing but the best in 2022.

As I sit down to write this month's article, I can't help but remember being at WOC 2020. The talk was about how our fellow industry professionals from China were not able to make the show due to a virus. That was two years and a world pandemic ago.

Like many I know have COVID Fatigue. We're tired of the talk, mandate or don't, mask-up or keep it optional. It does not look as though this is going to change anytime soon. As variants continue to circulate, I have read about a fourth variant about to start making a world-wide sweep.

So, I have two well-wishes for you. First, that you and your company can get to whatever your new normal is and focus on business. Second, that you and your loved ones stay healthy and safe.

I would like to leave you with a quote I heard recently, “If you die tonight your employer can or will advertise to fill your job within weeks. Your loved ones, family and friends, would miss you forever. Don't be too busy making a living that you forget about making a life.”

Wishing you all a happy healthy and prosperous new year in 2022.

### ***DCC Awards Submissions Now Open***

[Click here to see the brochure.](#)

### ***Safety & Risk Management Council***

**Respiratory Protection Ranked Second on OSHA's Top 10 Most Cited Violations for 2021**  
**Joe Whiteman, director of safety services**

The respiratory protection standard directs employers on establishing and maintaining a respiratory protection program. The standard sets out the requirements for administration, procedures, training, fit testing, medical evaluation, selection, use, maintenance, cleaning, storage, and repair. We should look at this as the canary in the mine shaft, understand where OSHA is citing under this standard, and review and measure our programs to ensure we're compliant and not exposing employees to a respiratory hazard and your organization to unnecessary OSHA violations.



As concrete contractors we're not strangers to wearing respiratory protection. It's imperative we understand the importance of a strong respiratory protection program and the requirements under this standard.

Top 5 Sections Cited:

- 1- 1910.134 (e)(1): Medical evaluation (618 violations)
- 2- 1910.134 (f)(2): Fit testing requirements (519 violations)
- 3- 1910.134 (c)(1): Written respiratory protection program (426 violations)
- 4- 1910.134 (k)(1): Training and information (61 violations)
- 5- 1910.134 (d)(1): General requirements (61 violations)

Many factors led to OSHA's increased focus on respiratory protection. Certainly the pandemic played a role, as respiratory protection violations overtook the number two spot for 2021. That said, knowing the areas where OSHA cited this standard, I recommend you perform a thorough review of your written program. Use the top five sections cited as a checklist to measure against your current program. Ensure there are no gaps and that all provisions are properly documented, employees properly trained, and other requirements under this standard are met.

## HOTLINE QUESTIONS

### CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION

Jim Klinger  
ascchotline@ascconline.org  
800 - 331 - 0688

### POLISHED CONCRETE

Chris Sullivan  
csullivan@ascconline.org  
844 - 923 - 4678

### SAFETY & INSURANCE

Joe Whiteman  
jwhiteman@ascconline.org  
833 - 281 - 9602

### DECORATIVE CONCRETE

Chris Sullivan  
csullivan@ascconline.org  
888 - 483 - 5288

ASCC members have access to these toll-free numbers for assistance.

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