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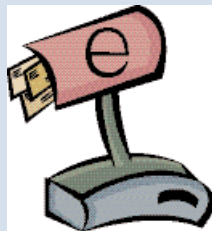
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## Readers Respond:

This issue's theme—Design & Engineering Advancements—brings a variety of topics to light, inspiring **SBC** readers from component manufacturers to engineers to pass along their thoughts.

### Design It Correctly in the First Place

*Component manufacturer Bob Becht of Chambers Truss added a few comments on an article about truss design, pointing out that advances in design software allow for more efficient and economical truss design rules.*

Dear Rachel,

I read your article "Rules of Good Truss Design" in the March issue of **SBC** with great interest. Most of what I read I agreed with but some of it was old-fashioned and might lead some to believe that not following these guidelines is "bad design."

I take issue with building a studio truss as a scissors truss with a non-structural filler. The scissors truss with filler is not structurally superior and adds a lot of useless lumber and plate. The scissors truss with filler has three bottom chords instead of two and a world of webbing. The studio truss you show has 12 pieces and 22 plates; the scissors truss with filler has 19 pieces and 56 plates! That's 58 percent more pieces! That just isn't good design. In a market that demands "value engineering," the scissors truss with filler is a non-starter. The argument that the scissors truss with filler is easier to repair doesn't bear much scrutiny. While it is easier to repair, the best solution is to design it correctly in the first place; we do it every day. All trusses are difficult to repair if they are built wrong.

Our customer service department doesn't report many problems with studio trusses. If the drop is inches off, the repair of the studio truss is as easy as the scissors truss with filler because in the studio, the bottom chord to the right of the peak and the drop web on the right side of the peak are dead wood and can be cut away. One of the reasons we used to build a scissors truss with filler (instead of a studio) was we did not have the capability to design the studio truss. Now we can design anything.

As the market becomes ever more competitive and the truss design software becomes more capable, many of the old practices die out. When I walk the shop I am amazed by

the designs we build and ship and the customer installs without problem.

Thanks for the article. I hope it stimulates discussion.

Bob Becht, Chambers Truss, Fort Pierce, FL

### Architects & Structural Engineering

*Industry veteran John Meeks submitted the following letter in response to a recent article published in **STRUCTURE** Magazine, surrounding the issue of building design and structural engineering. For full text of the article, "Should Architects be Allowed to Do Structural Engineering?," visit **Support Docs** at [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info).*

Dear **SBC Magazine**:

I recently came across the attached article in **STRUCTURE Magazine** and thought you might find it of interest. This paper pretty well explains the long term state of affairs between Architects and Engineers here in Florida. Outside Dade and Broward counties almost anyone could design a residence, the concept being that residences are simple structures and there is therefore no need for expensive Architects and Structural Engineers. The unusual progression of present day residential design has evolved into the most complex of structural designs. Ask any SE if he or she would rather design a \$2,000,000 residence or a \$2,000,000 warehouse building. My guess is that most S.E.s would prefer the warehouse.

How does this affect WTCA? It falls right into my earlier predictions that the wood truss industry will eventually offer complete engineered structures. The homeowners may choose to use an Architect for the overall building design to meet his/her family living conditions, but the overall S.E. design will go to the nearest component manufacturer who offers complete design services.

I thought you might find this article of concern to the component industry.

Very truly yours,

John E. Meeks, P.A., Ft. Lauderdale, FL **SBC**

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