



**ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING GEOLOGISTS
Southern California Section**

"Connecting Professionals, Practice, and the Public."

NEWSLETTER – March 2009

******NEW Officers!******

Chair - Peter Thams, thams.peter@gmail.com, 805-493-0663
 Vice Chair – Dave Perry, dlperry@mactec.com, 323-889-5326
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Visit the Southern California Section Website: www.aegsc.org

Newsletter Editor – Steve Varnell, svarnell@fugro.com, 805-650-7000

Meeting Date: *Tuesday, March 10th*****

*****Joint Meeting with **

- ***Location:** Steven’s Steak House, 5332 Stevens Place, Commerce, California
- Time:** 6:00 p.m.-Social Hour; 7:00 p.m.-Dinner; 7:45 p.m.-Announcements/Presentation
- Cost:** \$30 per person with reservations, \$35 without reservations, \$15 with a valid Student ID.
- Reservations:** Please e-mail Jon Relyea at jon@radiusmaps.net or call 800-554-3205.
- Speaker:** Edmund Medley, Ph.D., P.E., C.E.G., F.ASCE, Senior Consultant, Geosyntec Consultants
- Topic:** The Comforts of Ignorance and the Benefits of Arrogance - Lessons of the Failure Kind for the Geopractitioner

Abstract:

Ignorance and arrogance are all too common in the design professions. It is comforting to not know what one does not know. And, there are benefits to being arrogant: why waste time on having a colleague check your work if you know what you are doing? Why go through the pain of further education or professional development? Why should engineering geologists talk to geotechnical engineers (and vice versa)? After all: "I know enough geowhatever to get by." But ignorance leads to blissful mistakes and arrogance results in occasional spectacular, famous and expensive failures. In this lecture a few lessons are offered, particularly to the engineering geologist/geotechnical engineer/environmental scientist who thinks he/she knows it all.

Speaker:

Edmund Medley, Ph.D., P.E., C.E.G., F.ASCE is the **2009 Richard H. Jahns Distinguished Lecturer in Engineering Geology**. The selection committee for this award is composed of representatives of the **Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists (AEG)** and the **Engineering Geology Division of the Geological Society of America (GSA)**. The award was established in 1988 to commemorate Professor Jahns (1915-1983), who had an influential and diverse career in academia, consulting and government.

Dr. Medley is a Senior Consultant in the Oakland, California office of **Geosyntec Consultants**, an international consultancy renown for innovative solutions to geoengineering and environmental problems. Dr Medley started work in the Applied Earth Sciences in 1969, and now has over 30 years of unusually varied international experience in geotechnical and geological engineering consulting, mineral exploration prospecting, failure investigation, project management, litigation testifying, academic research, teaching, and lecturing. He has an international reputation for his pioneering research into the engineering and geological characterization of **bimrocks** (block-in-matrix rocks), complex geological mixtures of rock and soil such as melanges, fault rocks, weathered rocks, tills, and colluvium.

Dr. Medley also has experience evaluating geotechnical/geological engineering vulnerabilities and the causes of civil engineering failures, and has provided testimony for attorneys, insurance companies, contractors, and municipal clients. Projects include investigation of major landslides, rockfall hazards, expansive/collapsing soils, tunnel failures, coastal erosion, sinkholes and other ground movements in California, Nevada, District of Columbia; Hawaii, Guam, and Papua New Guinea. He is licensed as an engineer and geologist in the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom.

In 1978, graduating from the Univ. British Columbia, Dr. Medley was the first awardee of the *Aro A. Aho Memorial Medal for Academic Excellence in Geological Engineering*. He was the AEG Marliave Scholar in 1993, awarded for outstanding scholarship in Engineering Geology and Geological Engineering.

Chair Column

Peter Thams

Greetings Southern California Section. Thanks to all of you who attended the February dinner meeting at Steven's Steakhouse. Those attending enjoyed lively discussion and a great presentation by Jeff Keaton on evaluating scour at bridge foundations.

Following up on issues discussed in last month's column, the Board for Geologists and Geophysicists (BGG) survived the budget crisis without being merged with the State Mining and Geology Board. This doesn't necessarily mean efforts to merge the Boards won't continue, only that if the issue is pursued it will likely entail open hearings before legislature or the Little Hoover Commission. We will continue to follow this and provide updates as information becomes available. On a related topic, the newly-appointed Board Member (terminated Executive Officer Paul Sweeney) of the BGG attended his first board meeting in Sacramento. What was more disturbing than the reappearance of the former Executive Officer, was the behavior of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) legal staff who cut off **public commentary** regarding the suitability of the appointment. You are referred to the segment below devoted to the Board meeting for details, but I want to add here that I believe the actions of the DCA legal staff were outrageous and should not be tolerated. It may have been appropriate for the DCA legal staff to caution and advise other Board members on discussion regarding the newly-appointed member, but it was completely inappropriate for them to disallow **public commentary**. Anyone concerned about this should write directly to Darrell Steinberg, Chair of the Senate Rules Committee and to Carrie Lopez Director of the DCA with comments on both the appointment of the former Executive Officer to the Board and the repression of public commentary at an open Board meeting. The next BGG meeting is scheduled to be held in Southern California, which is also a good opportunity for members of this Section to be heard on these topics or on any other subject. Members are always encouraged to attend BGG meetings when they are held here in the area, and are *generally* free to speak on any topic they choose.

The other big topic of the month is the Joint Task Force on Areas of Practice (JTFAP) document, which, as of Friday, February 20, 2009, is available for review by the open membership of AEG. The JTFAP document is the four-year work product of a committee comprised of members of AEG, the Geoinstitute of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG). The stated aim of the "guidance" is *"defining the practice skills and academic knowledge base for the following professional practices within the geo-construction industry: Professional Civil Engineers Professional Geotechnical Engineers, Professional Engineering Geologists, [and] Professional Geologists."* These are certainly lofty aims and ones of great interest to all members of AEG. Although the document has been released for review and comments have been solicited, recent email traffic that includes some frank admissions by Dr. Allen Hathaway, Chair of the JTFAP, indicates that the document is in its final form as far as the JTFAP is concerned and no additional meetings are planned or anticipated to incorporate any commentary from the membership at large.

This is alarming and particularly since my initial review noted that Civil Engineers and Geotechnical Engineers are "defined" as being licensed professionals, whereas Professional Geologists and Professional Engineering Geologists are not. Licensure is not a practice skill or any component of an academic knowledge base. Licensure is awarded based on practice skills and academic knowledge base. I also noticed that bodies of knowledge for Geologists and Engineering Geologists do not include Chemistry, Physics, Calculus and Analytic Geometry, or Differential Equations as do the bodies of knowledge for the engineering disciplines. Chemistry, physics and mathematics through differential equations are standard core courses for a Bachelor of Science degree at most universities. Even if this does not apply to all academic programs awarding degrees in geology, it is certainly true for the majority and they need be included in the bodies of knowledge for the geologic disciplines. Is the JTFAP

recommending that the academic standards for Geologists be downgraded to eliminate these basic science skills?

Please take the time to print the document and review it carefully, noting any concerns you may have with the contents of the document or the implications of the document being adopted by AEG. The review period AEG members have been given ends on **March 22, 2009**. An extension of at least six months is being formally requested, which coincides with the Annual Meeting in Lake Tahoe in September to give members time to absorb the document and consider its potential ramifications. Next, bring your comments to the dinner meeting at Steven's Steakhouse on March 10th, which is coincidentally a joint meeting with ASCE, to share with your colleagues. If you do not define yourself, others will define you.

Report from the BGG Meeting – February 13, 2009, Sacramento, CA

Peter Thams

The Board for Geologists and Geophysicists (BGG) met at the Department of Consumer Affairs Building in Sacramento on February 13, 2009. A quorum was present that included President Blake, Vice President Ashby and Members Yu, Black, and Husar. Newly-appointed Board Member William Paul Sweeny, the former Executive Officer who was terminated by the Board in October 2006, was also present. The meeting was lightly attended by the public, but attracted several Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) legal staff and advisors, including Spencer Walker, Senior Advisor to the Director of the DCA, Don Chang, legal counsel, Gary Duke (former BGG counsel), Michael Santiago (current BGG counsel) and an unidentified DCA attorney.

Public Forum

The Public Forum portion of the meeting was opened by Charles Nestle representing AEG's Legislative Committee, who traveled from Los Angeles for the meeting and was prepared to offer testimony challenging the appropriateness of the appointment of the new Board Member. Shortly into Mr. Nestle's commentary, he was interrupted by Spencer Walker, who stood up and requested a private conference with Board President Blake. After conferring with President Blake, Mr. Walker informed Mr. Nestle that he would not be allowed to address the Board with regard to past actions of the new board member. Mr. Nestle asked if could address recent actions including the new board member's application and was told that he should not have had access to the application (unidentified DCA attorney), and that the appointee had been properly vetted by the appointing entity, the Senate Rules Committee (Mr. Walker) – no need for further discussion, take it up with the appointing entity. Tony Sawyer (San Diego Department of Environmental Health) who had also intended to address concerns regarding the new appointee, limited his public testimony to stating that he was amazed by the appointment and hoped that it would not affect the good work done by the Board over the past two years. Mr. Sawyer indicted that fallacies were discovered in the new appointee's application through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, and that they would be taken up with the Leader Pro Tem of the Senate who made the appointment.

Board Action

The Department of Finance and Governor Schwarzenegger recently proposed merging the BGG with the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) as part of the solution to the budget crisis. In response to these suggestions, the BGG evaluated the potential action and found that the projected cost savings were based on erroneous descriptions of the board and board functions retrieved from the failed California Performance Review of 2004. In consideration of the facts, BGG determined that such a

merger would harm the Board's licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary functions and would be inconsistent with public protection. The BGG resolved:

"That public protection in accordance with Business and Professions Code §7810.1 is best ensured by the self-funded Board remaining under the efficient, cost-effective DCA umbrella with its consumer-protection-through-licensed-professional-accountability mandate."

In a separate action, the Board recognized the efforts of former BGG staff Mary Scruggs, PG, CEG in developing the enforcement capabilities of the BGG. The Board cited Ms. Scruggs professionalism and conduct in the public service, resolving:

"That the Board expresses its appreciation and continued encouragement to Mary Scruggs for her efforts to further the Board's highest priority – public protection – in accordance with Business and Professions Code §7810.1."

It is interesting to note that the Board chose to honor Ms. Scruggs at the first Board Meeting attended by the newly-appointed Board Member. Documents obtained through a FOIA request indicate that testimony given by Ms. Scruggs at an earlier Board Meeting may have influenced the decision of the Board in the termination of the newly-appointed Board Member, who at the time was the Board's Executive Officer.

Committee Reports

Tom Barry, representing the Examination Committee, reported that the committee met twice this year and discussed moving the specialty certification exams to the fall. Accepting the report, Member Ashby asked whether an examination packet had been removed from the committee room during the meeting and whether or not the exam was, therefore, compromised. Some discussion followed between Board Members and the Executive Officer, Rick Rempel, which indicated the newly-appointed Board Member had attended a committee meeting unannounced and had helped himself to a meeting packet containing exam materials that had been prepared for committee members. When challenged and asked to leave the meeting, the newly-appointed Board Member apparently left, taking the meeting packet with him. Discussion of the event and the security of the exam materials was interrupted by Michael Santiago, who deemed the discussion inappropriate.

It is unclear why Mr. Santiago felt the discussion was inappropriate, since the security of exam materials has always been of the highest importance to licensing boards and only by knowing all the circumstances could a determination be made as to whether or not the examination materials were compromised.

Kim Taylor representing the newly-formed Policy Committee as Chair and sole member suggested the Board adopt policies and procedures for all Board and Committee members to follow. Member Ashby concurred and volunteered to be the Board Member on the Policy Committee. On the matter of the newly-appointed Board Member, Ms. Taylor indicated there was nothing to prevent the Board from sending letters to the Leader of the Senate Pro Tem (Darrell Steinberg, who also Chairs the Senate Rules Committee) and the Director of the DCA (Carrie Lopez) detailing any concerns regarding the appointee's past or present (application or exam materials) activities. Ms. Taylor cited Business and Professions Code §109 (b) as a basis for potential action by the Director of the DCA in regard to the examination materials. Business and Professions Code §109 (b) states:

"The director may initiate an investigation of any allegations of misconduct in the preparation, administration, or scoring of an examination which is administered by a board, or in the review of

qualifications which are a part of the licensing process of any board. A request for investigation shall be made by the director to the Division of Investigation through the chief of the division or to any law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction where the alleged misconduct occurred. “

Executive Officers Report

Rick Rempel reported that half-way through the fiscal year the board is on budget, and credited the recent exam and license fee increase for allowing the Board to pass on the actual examination and operating costs to licensees. The fee increases passed through the legislature with bipartisan support (or lack of republican opposition).

Enforcement activity continues with a caseload of 88 open cases, 52% of which are against unlicensed persons and 48% against licensees. Board staff emphasizes protection of the public in their enforcement efforts, and reported obtaining a reimbursement of \$3,120 for an individual consumer of geosciences services (environmental groundwater monitoring) performed by an unlicensed person. Board staff also continues to work with other state agencies including the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund (USTCF) to identify substandard, unreasonable, unnecessary work. In a recent case involving the USTCF, the Board adopted a Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order against a licensee for substandard work at two USTCF sites, resulting in a cost recovery of over \$200,000. Using this case as a tool, the USTCF is expected to save tens of millions of dollars in unnecessary or unreasonable work.

The Board also recently referred a case to the Attorney General's office, and one to the State of Washington for evaluation by that state's licensing department. Board staff is working with Washington and other State Licensing Boards to develop interstate support for high standards of practice in the geosciences.

AEG Awards Committee Solicitation for Nominations for 2009

Rosalind Munro

The AEG Awards committee is soliciting nominations for the three awards for which our committee is responsible. The Awards are: Claire P. Holdredge Award, Floyd T. Johnston Service Award, and the Douglas R. Piteau Outstanding Young Member Award. Please consider making a nomination. There are many deserving members, but they must be nominated for consideration. Send nominations to the Committee Chair (Roz Munro) for the Awards Committee to evaluate. The AEG Awards Committee consists of: Rosalind Munro (Chair), Jessica Humble, and Kenneth Neal.

1. The Claire P. Holdredge Award is presented for a publication within the previous five years by an AEG Member that is judged to be an outstanding contribution to the Environmental & Engineering Geology Profession. Nominations for this award are made by the membership at large to the Awards Committee. Please submit a nomination with the name(s) of the AEG publication member(s), the title of the publication, and the publisher information.

2. The Floyd T. Johnston Service Award is presented to an AEG Member for outstanding active and faithful service to the Association over a minimum period of nine years to coincide with Floyd's tenure as Executive Director. Contemporary Board members are not eligible until one year after leaving office. Nominations for this award are made by the membership at large to the Awards Committee. For nominations to be valid, they must be endorsed by three members having different AEG Section

affiliations. Please submit a nomination with the nominee endorsed by the required three members from different AEG Sections.

3. The Douglas R. Piteau Outstanding Young Member Award is given presented to an AEG Member who is age 35 or under (who is not 36 until January 1 in the year following the Annual Meeting at which the Award is given) and has excelled, either singly or in combination, in the areas of Technical Accomplishment, Service to the Association, and/or Service to the Environmental & Engineering Geology Profession. Please submit your nomination, or a nomination by your AEG Section. Each AEG Section may choose and publicize the name of an individual deserving of the Award and nominate that individual to the Award Committee.

All Award nominations must be submitted to the AEG Awards Committee by March 31st . All nominations for the Awards must be supported by descriptions of the individual's accomplishments and/or service to the industry or publication's merit (as appropriate to the award). The AEG Awards Committee, at its discretion, selects the final candidates from the nominees for each Award. Then the AEG Awards Committee forwards the Award selection recommendations to the President for confirmation.

Please send or email your nomination to the Awards Committee Chair at the address below.

Rosalind Munro, Chair

e-mail: rmunro@mactec.com

(323) 889-5366

MACTEC Engineering and Consulting, Inc.

5628 E. Slauson Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90040

Public Service Announcement

Charles Nestle

ZIP-A-DIPS Are Still Available!

How many of you have given up trying to find replacement for your faded and warped Zip-A-Dips? Zip-A-Dips are available from Don and Jeannine Lamar, who have lived in retirement in Reno for the past six years. Jeannine said that they don't plan on having any more made when they exhaust the present supply of Zip-A-Dips. She said, "It sure is nice to know that some geologists are still using ZADs."

Order your Zip-A-Dip by phone: (775) 322-5344. The price for 1 is \$4.00, or order 2-10 for \$3.50 ea., 11-49 for 3.00 ea., and 50+ for \$2.50 ea.

Chapter Meetings

Inland Empire:

For the latest information and updates, please visit <http://www.aegsc.org/chapters/inlandempire/>

Central Coast:

For the latest information and updates, please visit <http://www.aegsc.org/chapters/centralcoast/>

San Diego:

For the latest information and updates, please visit <http://www.aegsc.org/chapters/extremesocal/>

National Business Donation

- **Platinum** - \$1,000
- **Gold** - \$500
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Company name, address and contact information are presented in AEG News and section receives 10% of donation. A national donation does not yield a line in our local section newsletter.

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▪ Full Page	\$50	\$500

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* The deadline for submitting an advertisement for next month's newsletter is Friday, March 27th.

YEAR 2009 CONTRIBUTORS NEEDED

Contributions from corporations and individual members are greatly appreciated. Contributors will be listed in our newsletter throughout the year and can post their logo or business card in the newsletter if so desired. Please mail contributions made out to **AEG** to our section treasurer, Jon Relyea.

2009 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

For those of you who have not yet renewed (**the deadline was November 1**), are unsure about your membership status, or did not receive your membership dues statement, please contact AEG Headquarters at www.aegweb.org. You can renew your membership online. Please update your membership if you wish to continue to receive future issues of the newsletter.

*****NOTICE: Proposed New AEG Publication*****

WHO'S WHO in SO CALIFORNIA ENGINEERING GEOLOGY
The Evolution of Engineering Geology in Southern California

Have you ever wondered "Whatever happened to___?" or "I've heard of ___, who is he?"

The undersigned have decided to try to prepare an internet publication with the above title, which will include biographies of engineering geologists in southern California. We would like you to share your biography (autobiography) with other EGs. If you have worked on an interesting project, others would like to know about it.

If we limit each autobiography to 3 pages of text, plus photos, this publication would be more than 1,000 pages long. Therefore, we plan to utilize a proposed new AEG Foundation internet website, where there is no limit to total pages, and we can use color photos. Also, this new website will be available for no-charge access, worldwide, thus spreading the word on the history and evolution of engineering geology, and southern California's immense contribution.

We suggest (not require) three criteria for inclusion: 1. That you are a CA licensed CEG; 2. That you are now or once were a member of AEG; 3. That you have enough years of professional experience to relate one or more significant projects you have worked on. We believe there are more than 250 such EGs in southern California. This will be an evolving internet site where new autobiographies can be added.

We will also include Memorial biographies of past notable geologists in southern California. So far, we have identified 30, including John Buwalda, Ian Campbell, Tom Dibblee, Rollin Eckis, Perry Ehlig, Richard Jahns, John Mann, F.L. Ransome, Charles Richter, Dottie & Marty Stout, Gene Waggoner. Biographies of 14 of these notable geologists were published for the recent AEG Annual Meeting, in "History of the Association's First 50 Years," available from AEG HQ, contact Julie Keaton or Becky Roland.

Here is a CHECKLIST FOR YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

Complete NAME, address, phone, email; BIRTH DATE and place; UNIVERSITY(s) attended, major(s), degree(s), year(s); MILITARY service; FIRMS/AGENCIES you worked for; up to 3 significant PROJECTS you worked on; possibly relate a serious or humorous INCIDENT; a MENTOR you may wish to acknowledge; professional SOCIETIES, HONORS, AWARDS; HOBBIES; up to 5 PUBLICATIONS; PHOTOS of yourself and of projects (scanned images preferred).

So, if you wish to be included in this new internet publication, prepare your autobiography and email it with photos to: allen@hatheway.net and in the Subject box, type: So. Cal. Geologist. Or mail it to Allen Hatheway, 10256 Stoltz Dr., Rolla, MO 65401. Please, no more than 3 pages of text, single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt.

Please pass this notice on to those you may know who no longer get this Newsletter.

In the spirit of camaraderie, we thank you,

Richard Proctor
 Allen Hatheway
 David Rogers
 Larry Cann
 Bob Lynn

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES & ADVERTISING

If you would like to post an ad in the newsletter, please contact Steve Varnell at svarnell@fugro.com. Advertisement rates are shown in the box below.

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\$20/month		

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