

Greetings AEG Southern California Chapter Member

We hope you will join us for the AEG Southern California meeting on Wednesday, May 17th, the meeting will be held at Victorio's Ristorante, in North Hollywood, on **Wednesday, May 17th**.

Michael Piepenburg will be presenting on the June 24, 1971 Sylmar Tunnel Fire. Mike Piepenburg (Pea-pen-burg) is currently a principal project geologist with Mott MacDonald in Los Angeles and is presently serving as the geotechnical instrumentation specialist for the tunnel and station construction of Metro's Purple Line subway in west Los Angeles. His career as a geologist started at the tender of age of three, when young Michael was caught throwing rocks at a neighbor's car. After being caught and spanked, he faced the choice of being a geologist or a juvenile delinquent. He chose geology and through good fortune has spent most of his career building water, wastewater, subway, highway, and railroad tunnels across the United States, including the first phase of the L.A. Metro in downtown Los Angeles in the late 1980s.

Mike completed his M.S. in Geology at Cal State – Los Angeles and an M.E. in Geotechnics from Missouri University of Science and Technology. He is a certified construction manager as well as a California C.E.G and has been one of the co-chairmen for the AEG Tunneling Committee for the last seven years.

Please see below for meeting information including whom to RSVP.

Presentation Topic: *June 24, 1971 Sylmar Tunnel Fire – A Grim Reminder*

In mid-June 1971, five miles of the 18-foot diameter San Fernando Water Tunnel located in Sylmar California (near Los Angeles) had been completed. Only a half mile of excavation remained to be completed when natural gas (methane) pockets entering into the tunnel were ignited and four workers seriously injured. Less than 24 hours after this first incident, a more severe natural gas explosion occurred in the tunnel resulting in 18 miners being trapped underground at a distance of five miles from the portal.

Despite heroic efforts by firefighters and rescuers, 17 miners died that day – including one miner who had been treated from injuries caused by the previous day's explosion. Only one man survived and the Sylmar Tunnel Explosion of June 24, 1971, remains one of the worst tunnel disasters in California history. The disaster not only resulted in the toughest mining and tunnel regulations in the nation but also led California to create a state occupational safety agency, known as Cal/OSHA.

This talk is part history lesson and part grim reminder that we should never be complacent or (over)confident about working in potentially gassy or gassy conditions underground.

Speaker: Mr. Michael A. Piepenburg, Principal Project Geologist, Mott McDonald, Los Angeles, California.

Meeting date: Wednesday, May 17th.

Location: Victorio's Ristorante, 10901 Victory Boulevard, North Hollywood, CA 91606, 818-762-9000.

Time: 5:45 pm Social Hour, 6:45 pm Dinner, 7:45 pm Program

Cost: \$45 per person with reservations in advance for AEG members, \$50 without reservations (at the door), FREE for students with a valid student ID and current AEG Student membership, the Student Membership is FREE as well, so join and get a free dinner.

Reservations: Please email Darrin Hasham at: DHASHAM@EARTHSYSTEMS.COM or call (909) 380-3289. Or reply to this email!

Please make reservations prior to 3 p.m., Tuesday, May 16th.

