

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING GEOLOGISTS

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SECTION

"Serving Professionals in Engineering, Environmental and Ground-Water Geology Since 1957"

MAY 1996

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Deadline for submittals to the June Newsletter: May 20

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

May 14, 1996

Structural Engineering Perspectives in Hillside Home Repair

presented by

David Tourje

**Reservations must be made by Friday, May 10!
Call GeoSoils at (818) 785-2158**

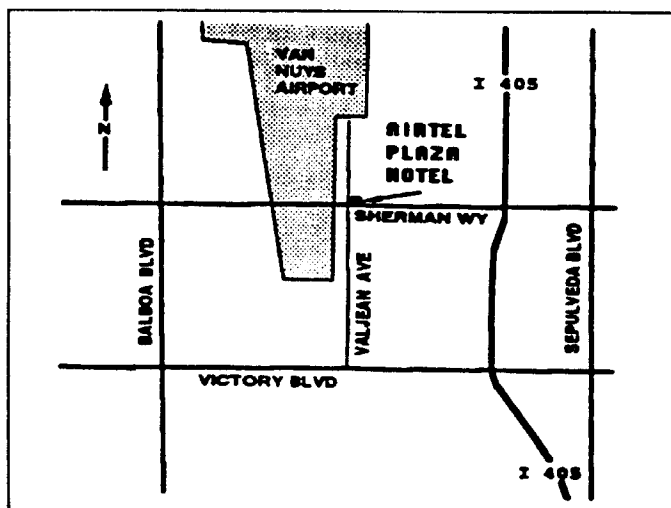
**Social Hour: 6:00 pm
Dinner: 7:00 pm
Meeting: 8:00 pm**

Location:

**Airtel Hotel
5332 Stevens Place
Van Nuys**

Cost: \$25.00
(\$10.00 for full-time students with valid I.D.)

Map to Meeting



MAY PROGRAM

Structural Engineering Perspectives in Hillside Home Repair

David Tourje

Alpha Structural, Inc.
(213) 258-5482

More and more the structural correction of hillside homes and slope failures has become a common sight. Due to the general decrease in new home construction, homeowners are put in the position to fix rather than build. The Northridge and other earthquakes exacerbate this already existing reality.

Many hillside homes built in the 1950's and 1960's, primarily, were built without the stringent geotechnical and structural standards in use today. They are now showing signs of distress due to factors such as:

- shallow pile embedment depths leading to foundation movement
- erosion
- degradation of poorly reinforced concrete
- failure of fill soils
- creep

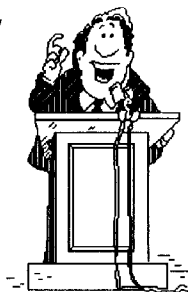
Some of these sites were poorly graded and now show distress in the form of cut/fill lots failing at the daylight line, or massive fill creep. Also, ancient, previously unrecognized landslides have failed after builders began development offsite resulting in activation of the slides due to grading, addition of water, etc.

This type of work is not new in southern California, however, corrective measures seem to become more

advanced as more properties are being repaired and less new construction is occurring.

This talk will include a slide presentation of onsite and aerial photography, and will focus on some interesting examples of pile-supported foundation underpinning and slope corrections; some involving correction of ancient landslides, and various foundation correction procedures.

Biographical Information



David Tourje began in the construction trade in 1978. While becoming a journeyman carpenter and form setter, his focus was, from the beginning, on hillside construction and structural repair — starting with hand compacting slope failures in the Ventura County area during the early 1980's. Mr. Tourje constructed many high difficulty hillside homes during the 1980's, and has underpinned or repaired over 1,500 damaged structures and slopes, inspecting and evaluating over 5,000 properties. David Tourje is licensed as a Foundation Contractor (C-8), General Contractor (B-1), and General Engineering Contractor (A). He has been hired as an expert witness on numerous structural failures involved in litigation. Alpha Structural specializes in the design and implementation of foundation repair, hillside repair, and general structural rehabilitation. ϕ

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

by

Joseph Cota

On Saturday, April 13, 1996 AEG's Board of Directors met on the fifth floor of the Comfort Inn in downtown Denver. Outside the windows, a low, steady flurry blew large wispy snowflakes against the glass. As the good citizens of Denver set out for Arapaho Basin, Copper Mountain, Loveland, and other Rocky Mountain ski areas, AEG Section Chairpersons from around the country and Canada, diligently discussed budgets, membership, publications, annual meetings, and other issues of the organization. Some of the topics discussed were:

Last year's AEG Annual Meeting in Sacramento was a huge success which generated approximately \$30,000 which will be used for AEG functions including new publications, computer training for headquarters staff, funding for next years' meeting, committee activities, and other AEG functions. Hats off to **Jim Parsons**, the Sacramento meeting Chairman for all of his hard work to make that meeting a success.

This years' annual meeting will be in New Brunswick, New Jersey. This should be a excellent meeting, we just hope it will be well attended. There will be a field trip to the New Jersey Highlands which will include underground tours and mineral collecting at tungsten and magnetite mines. Other field trips will be to a water tunnel and a large landfill (ugh!); and for the spouses, Atlantic City, and Philadelphia. Please plan to attend with your loved one as this is your chance to visit the east coast, and to learn something while you're there. Following this meeting, the next four annual meetings will be held west of the Rockies.

AEG Executive Director, **Ed Blackey**, reported that over the past year we have had more new members than any previous year. The bad news is that we also have more members not renewing than ever. If you or someone you know has not renewed for any particular reason or complaint, please let me know so that we can try to address the problem.

The Board approved a recommendation from Treasurer **James May** to reduce the

annual budget from \$462,330 to \$390,018 because of lack of funds from the unexpectedly low membership renewals. This translates to possible cuts funding for AEG Special Publications currently in preparation.

The Board approved the nomination of **Eldon Gath** for President, **Paul DuMontelle** for Vice President, **James May** for Treasurer, and **Rex Upp** for Secretary. Congratulations Eldon! Make sure to bug him regularly.

The Board approved the nomination of two Honorary Members, whose names will remain secret until they have been notified.

Moving along to problems at hand in California, the Business and Professions Committee met on April 22, 1996 to hear SB 2031 which would reinstate the Board of Registration of Geologists and Geophysicists for another four years. The following paragraph is taken from a letter to me from **Judith Wolen**, AEG's ears in Sacramento. The bill passed unanimously with no testimony or discussion. The bill will now go to the Senate Appropriations Committee because it affects the budget, then it will go to the Senate floor. Once it has passed the Senate it will then go to the Assembly to be heard in the Assembly policy committee and Assembly finance committee, then to the Assembly floor.

A potential problem, however, is **Pete Wilson** and the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA). A letter from the Governor's Office dated April 25, 1996 proposes to abolish seven registration boards and deregulate fourteen professions and trades. The letter states, "Californians expect and need state government to take care of certain essential functions, but others should be handled by the private sector or abolished altogether. Today's action is an important step towards eliminating some of the unnecessary regulation and bureaucracy in state government, and giving Californians the best value for their hard-earned tax dollars." This sounds like something that a governor should say. Unfortunately, the governor proposes to practice protection

for the profession of geology, and license the *title* "geologist". This means that anyone could practice geology, but just not call themselves "geologists". Worse yet, the governor thinks this will save tax dollars, and I think that he really believes this. He also stated that State and Consumer services Secretary Joanne Kozberg and Department of Consumer Affairs Director **Marjorie Berte** "... did an outstanding job rooting out unnecessary government functions and promoting competition to benefit California consumers."

Let's examine why the governor might think that deregulating the professional practice of geology to a title act would reduce government spending. **Marjorie Berte**, the director of DCA, *erroneously* stated in a report to the California Legislature released April 25, 1996, "*The consumers of services of geologists/geophysicists are primarily governmental agencies.*" Where does she get her misinformation?

"As articulated in this Report to the California Legislature, the Administration adheres to the principle that competitive markets open to consumers who have adequate information regarding their choices provide the optimum consumer protection. When the potential harm to a consumer's health, safety, or *financial welfare is of sufficient magnitude, or when consumers are unable to act in their own best interests to protect themselves, then government intervention into the market is justified. And then, the type and level of government regulation must be appropriate to the degree of risk faced by consumers.*" Berte recommends in the report "scaling back government control of certified public accountants, and geologists and geophysicists by substituting a title/certification program for the current licensing programs which overly restrict competition. This would allow greater competition in the accounting, geologists and geophysicists fields without government regulation, but would permit only those practitioners who meet the certification standards set by the boards to call themselves 'state certified'

public accountants, geologists, or geophysicists". Currently, persons are prohibited from practicing or offering to practice geology or geophysics and from using the "Registered" geologist or geophysicist title unless registered by the board.

Many consumers, knowing very little about geological problems and less about the professionals who investigate them, would potentially choose a low cost "foundation expert" to design a foundation for their new home over a qualified geologist who probably would recommend a more detailed study which could include aerial photograph review, research of available geologic reports, borings and trenches, etc., at a higher initial cost. Geological disasters such as landslides and flood hazards which were not identified and properly mitigated by unqualified consultants could destroy the largest investments most people make in their lifetimes.

Berte's report further says, "As Governor Wilson says in his report on Competitive Government, we seek government that spends your money wisely only on essential services and does so as efficiently as possible."

Is Berte simply trying to make political points with the governor by using misinformation? Or does she just not know any better? I tried to meet with her last month before her report was released to discuss what DCA's recommendations to the Legislature would be, but she would not meet with either myself, **Jim Graham**, the Executive Director of GRA, or **Jim Jacobs** AIPG's President. We did, however, meet in Sacramento last month with **Curt Augustine**, Marjorie Berte's assistant. However, he was not allow to discuss DCA's findings with us.

Senate Bill 2031 still has a long way to go, so we will be asking for your letters of support again in the near future. The same letters can be used for each committee with changes in the addressee.

Meanwhile, AEG needs to let the governor know who the *real* consumers of professional geological services are and how Berte's recommendation to deregulate geologists would cost unwary consumers choosing unqualified, cheaper consultants, millions of dollars.

IMPORTANT

Please hold off on writing letters to DCA and the governor until we talk about it at the next meeting. There is a lot of political game-playing going on with this proposal, and a lot of questionable rationale cited in support of it. Right now, we don't know how severely the Governor's plan will impact the protection offered to the public by the current "practice protection" style of licensure in California for geologists and geophysicists. AEG's leadership in California will stay on top of this situation and keep you advised. AEG plans to have a strategy meeting in Sacramento the week of May 5 - 10. Both the Board and its Professional Affairs Committee will meet in Sacramento May 10, and we may be able to coordinate our meeting with theirs.

I'll have a full report at our May Section meeting. Meanwhile, keep cool. One hard lesson we may have learned as we strive to build credibility with the politicians in Sacramento is that irate letters and phone calls do great harm to our cause. ϕ

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Executive Director (exempt position), Seismic Safety Commission. Salary approximately \$78,000 to \$84,000 per year. The Executive Director reports to the Commission and is responsible for the executive and administrative duties of the Commission. The executive Director organizes, coordinates, supervises, and directs to operations and affairs of the Commission. Apply by sending a current résumé to: Department of General Services, Personnel Section, 1325 J Street, Suite 1714, Sacramento, CA 95814, Attention: Lynn Catania, 916-323-7472. Final filing date: May 3, 1996.

The California Seismic Safety Commission is a small, exciting state agency that advises the Governor, legislature, and the public on earthquake policy issues. The Commission provides state government with policy, information, oversight, and leadership on seismic issues that affect existing and new development, emergency response and disaster recovery. It develops and monitors seismic risk mitigation programs, holds monthly hearings, and sponsors legislation regarding seismic safety. The Commission has a staff and is located in midtown Sacramento. ϕ

JOB WANTED

GEOLOGIST: I have approximately five years experience with both geotechnical and environmental projects. I have developed a familiarity with many field tasks along with report writing and some project management. I am 40-hour Cal OSHA trained, certified to operate a nuclear gauge, and look forward to achieving State of California Registered Geologist/Certified Engineering Geologist certification in the near future. I AM WILLING TO WORK ON A PART-TIME SCHEDULE OR TEMPORARY PROJECTS. WILL TRAVEL. FLEXIBLE. Please leave a message for David M. Thompson at: (909) 629-4018. ϕ

COMPUTER CORNER

The Rock Engineering Group at the University of Toronto has recently announced their new software web site:

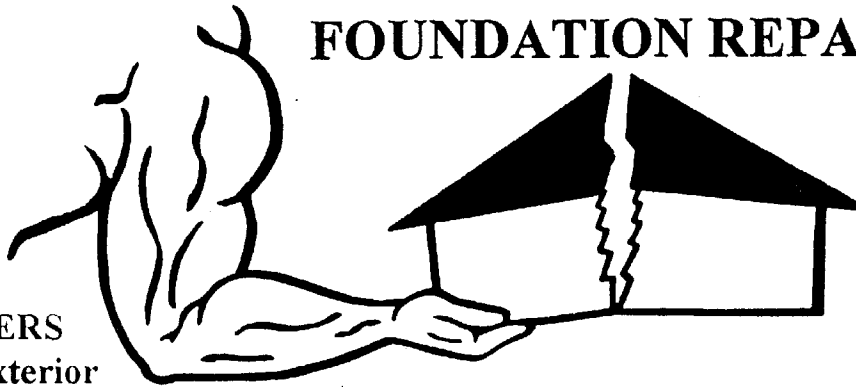
<http://www.rockeng.utoronto.ca>

The blurb accompanying the announcement is as follows:

For those who are unfamiliar with our different software packages, they are currently being used by industry leaders in over 60 countries, and are quickly becoming standard tools in the design of underground and surface excavations. We offer packages which fall into three categories: 1) stress analysis (PHASES, EXAMINE-2D, EXAMINE-3D), 2) limit equilibrium (SWEDGE, UNWEDGE, SLIDE, CPILLAR), and 3) stereographic projection for mapping joint data (DIPS). More information is available at their web site.

Found in the "free software" area of the web site is a distinct element simulation of a rock block bouncing down a slope. The program uses statistical variation on the properties of the slope and the shape of the rock block. The file name is: tumble.zip (you'll need pk-zip to uncompress it.). ϕ

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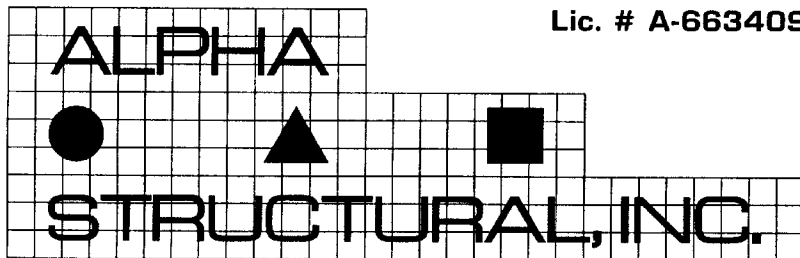
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