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Editor's Message

Hello to all members.

Well, another year has come to an end. The last half of this year has been an exciting one, with various lectures and presentations. We hope for many more events next year to keep the members interacting and well informed.

Here's wishing everyone a happy festive season.

As usual please send us any interesting articles that you would like to share with the members.

Salona Naidoo

Note from the President

As 2009 nears the end, there have been a couple of significant changes in the SAIEG Council. After successfully running SAIEG for the first 6 months of the year and then taking a short break, during October Margaret Wynne reluctantly decided to resign as President of SAIEG for personal reasons. The Council wishes her well in her new endeavours and thanks her for her valuable contribution over the past years as a council member and then Vice President, before becoming President.

As a result I have prematurely moved into the Presidents role and John Stiff has been appointed as the Vice President. Robert Leyland and Amrita Maharaj have also been co-opted onto the council to lighten the load of other council members. Welcome Robert and Amy.

The Council is periodically approached with the question of what SAIEG members get for their annual subscription. Obviously, our primary aim is to give members value for their money. Some of the benefits currently provided for members include

- subsidisation, organisation and running of the evening lectures, courses, site visits and conferences organised by SAIEG,
- listing of names and companies in the Members Directory (which can be made available to potential clients on request),
- interaction on behalf of members with state and other professional organisations such as SACNAS, SANS, ECSA, AEG, IAEG and the Geotechnical Division,
- the newsletter, which includes local news and in future will include short technical contributions of interest or novel solutions implemented by our membership,
- the recognition of those members and others who make outstanding contributions to the industry, and we hope soon to include a bursary for one or two students,
- provision of the Bulletin for those members who subscribe (subscribers also have access through Springer and a token that will be available from the SAIEG secretariat to all papers published in the Bulletin since the late 1960s)
- increased information and technical data on the web-site – this is about to be re-designed and will have a members only section that will provide copies of papers, Conference proceedings, etc, accessible only to members, and of course,
- social functions following most technical sessions with the opportunity to meet and interact with other members.

As the year-end approaches and members move away on holiday or relax at home for a well-earned break in December, I would like to wish you all the best for the festive season, take it easy on the roads and we look forward to an interesting and active year in SAIEG during 2010.

Phil-Paige Green – President

Report Back: Engineering Geology Road Show

In an attempt to interest more undergraduate geology students in engineering geology and also to identify opportunities and fields of possible interest for honours students already studying engineering geology, two “road shows” were held during July and August.

In all, about 60 students attended the two shows, held in Pretoria and Durban at the respective Geology Departments of the Universities of Pretoria and KwaZulu Natal. Phil Paige-Green gave a comprehensive presentation on the status, registration and activities of engineering geology and the benefits of becoming a member of SAIEG. He was backed up in Pretoria by Prof Louis Van Rooy and in Durban by Dr Rodney Maud. The presentations were followed by a question time and then drinks and snacks.

SAIEG would like to thank the two universities involved, and in particular Prof Louis Van Rooy and Dr Nick Richards for assisting with the venues and arrangements.

Students who attended were (and still are) encouraged to join SAIEG as there is no subscription fee for them while still full-time students and they only need to be

“supported” by their lecturer. It is hoped that in this way, we will be able to increase our numbers and ultimately offer more benefits to our members. It is anticipated that these shows will probably become annual events, although the presenters are likely to change regularly.

Phil-Paige Green



PHOTOGRAPH'S NEEDED!

We are looking for photographs depicting what engineering and environmental geologists do and get to experience in their profession. The photographs will primarily be used on the top of each of the web site pages. Additional photographs will be placed on a new gallery page.

Please have a quick look through your project photos and send select ones to Richard Puchner (puchner@jaws.co.za). Note that unless stated otherwise, by sending a photograph to SAIEG, the following will be assumed:

- *The photographer grants permission to SAIEG to use the photograph on it's webpage, printed material, or any other form of public display.*
- *Permission has been obtained from the relevant authority or project manager concerned.*

Richard Puchner

Report Back: IAEG Executive and Council Meetings, Chengdu, China

As Vice-President for Africa of IAEG, Phil Paige-Green was able to attend the council and Executive Committee meetings of IAEG in Chengdu, China during September 2009. This was held in conjunction with the 7th Asian Regional Conference of IAEG and the International Symposium on Geological Engineering problems in Major Construction Projects.

The ExCo meeting was held on the 7th September and took a full day (plus some extra hours on the 9th) and the Council Meeting was held on the 8th during which the affairs of the Association were assessed and planned. A conscious decision has been made to identify where the Association needs to be heading, how to improve the benefits for the members and how to grow the numbers which have been relatively static (at about 4000 members of which about 3800 are fully paid up).

Communications were seen as a major challenge and improvement of the web-site (<http://www.iaeg.info>) in order to attract members and provide access to information was identified as a high priority. Various documents are to be added to the website and the Commissions have all been requested to make progress, update their information on the website and improve their value or else they will be closed down. There is thus useful information available on a number of the Commission pages.

A recent innovation is that all subscribers to the Bulletin can obtain a “token” from SAIEG which will allow them to access the Springer website, which now contains all of the Bulletins ever published by IAEG (going back to the early 70’s). Please do not hesitate to contact SAIEG for your token, which is essentially a password to the Springer website, *provided that you subscribe to the Bulletin*.

Some time was spent discussing the next IAEG international conference (IAEG 2010 in Auckland New Zealand in September 2010), which promises to be a milestone in the IAEG conference series. There have been 900 abstracts submitted (disappointingly only about 20 from South Africa) and with this many to select from, the quality of the papers can only be exceptional. Top Keynote speakers have been invited and various activities and field trips look to be of the highest order. Start making your plans to get there as this will be one conference not to miss.

In addition to the meetings, the conference in Chengdu was extremely informative and useful. Although covering a wide range of interests, there was obviously a strong bias towards the effects of the May 2008 8 Richter scale Wenchuan earthquake only about 120 km from Chengdu, and the thousands of landslides that accompanied it.

There were about 250 delegates at the conference from 31 countries and both the technical and social activities were excellent. There is no doubt that the Chinese are exceptional hosts and go out of their way to ensure that all delegates gain as much as possible.

Unfortunately, I was not able to register for any of the post-conference field trips (one to Wenchuan and another being a 3 day cruise on the Three Gorges Dam inspecting landslides and other engineering geological phenomena. Had I known at the time of registration what I know now, there is no way that I would have missed one of the visits.

Phil-Paige Green

Senior Emeritus Membership



Mr Joe De Beer has been bestowed the membership category of Senior Emeritus Member of the AEG. In accordance with the AEG's By-Law Article 1.7, he has earned this distinguished category of membership by having retired from practice and having been a Member in good standing for at least 25 years.

Congratulations!

Report Back : The 4th International Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference - Egypt

The Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference (YGEC) is a conference held for young engineers under the age of 35. Every four years, two selected representatives from countries all over the world participate in the International Geotechnical Engineers Conference (iYGEC). The 4th iYGEC was recently held in tandem with the ISSMGE (International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering) conference. This year the conferences were hosted in Alexandria by the Egyptian Geotechnical Society. As I'd previously mentioned in the November 2008 SAIEG newsletter, Trevor Green and myself were selected at the South African YGEC in Durban to represent South Africa at the 4th iYGEC this October in Egypt.



South African representatives at the 4th iYGEC
(from left: Trevor Green and Richard Puchner)

Having just returned from Egypt, I feel both fortunate to have seen all the ancient wonders of the country and honoured to have been present among some of the brightest young geotechnical engineers in the world. Eighty two delegates from 41 different countries attended the iYGEC. This may appear small in comparison to the estimated 1200 delegates of the main conference, but it was in fact the ideal size to enable interaction between all delegates on a social level in between presentations. We discovered that although there may subtle differences in the way we do things on a professional and cultural level, there was one undeniable common goal at the end each long day of conference presentations: to try find a watering hole! Being a relatively dry country (and I'm not referring to the lack of rain) the only bars we could find within walking distance from the hotel were coffee bars. As luck would have it, we found a gentleman's bar in the Four Seasons hotel 15 minutes walk up the bustling boulevard. Their local brand of Sakara, for an equivalent of R37, seemed more refreshing than R40 for a Heineken or Stella. The limited choice and high price of beers appeared to be the norm through out the rest of the country.



Delegates of the 4th iYGEC

Back to the conference, following a keynote lecture by Prof. Ahmed Elgamal (University of California) on 3D computational modelling in geomechanics, the iYGEC was formally opened by Prof. Mamdouh Hamza (Chairman of the 17th ISSMGE organising committee), Prof. Neil Taylor (Secretary of ISSMGE) and Prof. Pedro Seco e Pinto (President of the ISSMGE). Technical sessions took place over the next two days. Due to the limited time, the conference ran parallel sessions. In total, eight sessions were held per day, with each session chaired by two professors or doctors from the ISSMGE committee. Although intimidating, it was an honour to receive questions from them and the delegates. I'd like to believe that my presentation titled "Geotechnical Investigation of Decline Shaft Portals" was a refreshing change from the many of the other papers which delved into serious calculations. The winning formula for chosen papers from each session seemed to include finite element modelling in some form or another. Of the 16 winners of iYGEC T-shirts, three were selected to present at the main ISSMGE conference, which started as the iYGEC ended. As part of the iYGEC package, the young delegates were afforded the opportunity to attend the first two days of the main conference, which included a Terzaghi oration and state-of-the-art lectures covering topics ranging from materials behaviour, to design and construction.

Trevor and I were extremely impressed by the organisation of the iYGEC as well as the hospitality and friendliness of the Egyptians as a whole. The friendliness was perhaps a bit overwhelming when visiting tourist destinations, where locals were extremely persistent in selling their souvenirs or demanding the customary "baksheesh" or tip in return for small deeds. At the end of the iYGEC a cultural evening was held around the hosting hotel's swimming pool. Shows of traditional Egyptian dancing were displayed on a huge stage erected with lights, lasers, and flame throwers! Throughout the evening guests were implored to get on to the stage and join in the dancing by a most entertaining MC. Had there been some beverage of any fermented kind, more might

have joined in. None the less, we were treated to a magnificent buffet of Egyptian sights, sounds and tastes. The whole atmosphere, together with the swooping camera crane and roaming spotlight camera made us feel like celebrities. The evening brought to an end a most memorable conference.



The end-of-conference dinner and dance

Richard Puchner

Membership

If anyone has not received their SAIEG membership certificate, please send a query to Greg Heath ...gheath@geoscience.org.za

Report Back: SAIEG 2nd Brink Memorial Lecture – Tony Brink, Not An Ordinary Man

The second Brink Memorial Lecture was held on 14 October 2009 entitled “Tony Brink, Not an Ordinary Man”. A well anticipated lecture was presented by Dr Tony Williams, a close friend and colleague of the late Tony Brink.

Dr Williams kept the members entertained, speaking about his close association with Tony Brink and some of the work that they did together over the years, which culminated in various well known publications.

The response to the lecture was overwhelming, showing the significance of Tony Brink's work to the engineering geology profession. All in all...it was a very memorable evening.

Report Back: SAIEG Evening Lecture “Legal Risk Management”

A SAIEG evening lecture was held on the 04 November 2009 entitled “Legal Risk Management”. The lecture was presented by Meggyn Visser of Glenrand MIB.

The presentation focused on management of liability and covered the following aspects viz:

- Local risk management
- Understanding the nature of your liability
- Managing and limiting your liability
- Case studies
- Contacts
- PI Insurance policy and program

The talk was very informative and helpful as indicated from the enormous amount of questions and queries that were asked immediately after the talk. The evening was a great success.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything you would like to see in the newsletter, or if you have any suggestions or ideas. Until next time....All the best this festive season.

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