

January 21, 2013

## President's Fiscal Update



Todd Kamisky  
CalGeo President

For the last 10 years, CalGeo has had a very successful and lucrative relationship with the California State Compensation Insurance Fund (SCIF). Our role has been that of Safety Group Administrator, which included numerous and various tasks associated with managing the safety group. The CalGeo office staff, Marsha Myers and Jean Yurkovic, has completed all of the tasks associated with our safety group, often earning CalGeo praise from SCIF that we are consistently one of the best performing groups they have. In return for the organization's efforts, we were compensated quite well. To read more about the changes taking place between State Compensation Insurance Fund and CalGeo, click [here](#).

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## Outstanding Project Awards

### Deadline to Enter Is Quickly Approaching!

CalGeo will be recognizing firms for their outstanding geotechnical projects at our Annual Conference in May. Entries will be judged on innovation, difficulty of the investigation (difficulty of construction for design-build projects), quality of reports, success of interaction between the design team, and social impact of the project.

The deadline for submitting your company's technical achievements is January 28, 2013. Click [here](#) to download the rules and application package.

Don't delay, enter today!



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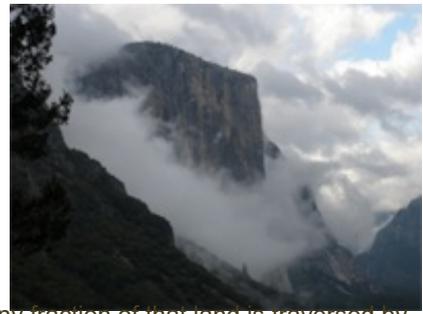
## Yosemite... Did You Know?

### Interesting Annual Conference Site Facts

-  Giant Sequoias which grow in Yosemite National Park are the biggest living things on the planet, often towering to nearly 300 feet tall. However, the seed for the Giant Sequoia is only the size of a

piece of oatmeal. Grizzly Giant is the name of the oldest Sequoia in Yosemite Park, measuring 209 feet tall and 96 feet around.

- 📌 Yosemite Park was the first area of land set aside by the U.S. government for preservation and protection.
- 📌 Though Half Dome and El Capitan are Yosemite's most well known summits, Mt. Lyell is actually Yosemite's highest peak at 13,120 feet.
- 📌 Yosemite National Park covers nearly 1,200 square miles, yet only a tiny fraction of that land is traversed by visitors. The vast majority of the park is largely untouched and uninhabited by humans.
- 📌 Black bears found in Yosemite weigh between 150 and 500 pounds when full grown, but when they are born, they weigh less than half a pound. The mother black bear is fast asleep during hibernation when her baby is born.



To register for this spring's Annual Conference in Yosemite, [click here](#).

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## CalGeo's Legislative Advocate Updates

### New Member Outreach

*By Rick Keene  
Keene Consulting*

CalGeo had a busy fall and winter, meeting with engineering advocacy groups, the BPELSG Board and executives, and with SCIF on insurance issues. On each front we were pursuing tighter collaboration and clarifying issues for our advocacy efforts for this coming year. More details on those next month.

At the same time, working with Board Member David Hamilton and President Todd Kamisky, we have been designing and refining brand new outreach approaches to market CalGeo membership to new firms. It's now ready to test drive.



This creative process has been extremely encouraging and eye-opening. To prepare to articulate the benefits of CalGeo to new people, we have cataloged all the ways CalGeo currently enhances the competencies and practices of our members. The industry has illuminated the incredible impact CalGeo already has on the welfare of geotechnical practitioners. It's impressive.

Your President and I already have set three meetings for January to pitch the benefits of CalGeo membership to new firms. With more members, many hands will make even lighter work and even more impact. We will share with you the results of our efforts.

Think of non-member firms in your own area we might meet with. I would be happy to facilitate a meeting. You can email me at [Rick.keene@yahoo.com](mailto:Rick.keene@yahoo.com).

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## Counsel's Corner

### Supreme Court Forces Unilaterally Drafted Arbitration Clause

*By Thomas Gill*



Thomas Gill,  
Managing Partner  
Manning & Kass

In 2012, the California Supreme Court greatly expanded the concept of mandatory arbitration in construction disputes. The court held that a homeowners' association, which did not exist at the time when a contract mandating binding arbitration was agreed to, was nevertheless forced to resolve its construction-related disputes with a developer through mandatory binding arbitration. Developers and general contractors are likely to hang their hats on this ruling in the future to drag unsuspecting parties into the waters of binding arbitration. Another strike against the right to trial by jury of your peers in California! Click [here](#) to read more on this topic.

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## Member News

### Holdrege & Kull Consulting Engineers

Holdrege & Kull is pleased to announce that Dan Keller from its Truckee office recently added California Geotechnical Engineer registration to his list of accomplishments. Dan began his geotechnical engineering career in 2001 and joined the H&K family in 2004. He has performed numerous geotechnical investigations for schools, hospitals, and commercial and residential projects in and around Truckee, California. Dan has a strong background in geotechnical engineering with a structural engineering emphasis. He holds a M.S. in civil engineering with geotechnical emphasis from U.C. Berkeley. During the winter, Dan is a professional ski patroller and avalanche forecaster at the Sugar Bowl ski resort near Donner Summit.



*Do you have news to share? Please email us at [jjurkovic@calgeo.org](mailto:jjurkovic@calgeo.org).*

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## Save the Date!

### Geotechnical Exploration Seminar

If you would like to attend the exciting and informational seminar hosted by Taber Consultants, click [here](#) for more information.

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## HR Corner

### Employee Engagement - Fact or Fiction?

*By Scott Ripley, e3Financial  
Benefits Advisor*

As a result of the recession, employers have been required to do more with less. What steps are you taking to increase employee engagement in your firm? Here are three tips:

### 1. Electronic Employee Surveys and Focus Groups

Find out what's on the minds of your employees to help provide strategic direction. Unless you're clairvoyant, just ask!

### 2. Provide Total Compensation Statement or "Hidden Paychecks"

Most employees are unaware of the value of their benefits package. Help them understand by illustrating the generous contributions you are providing.

### 3. Encourage Employee Interaction and Team Building

Ping pong tournaments, giveaways, lunch and learns, and community volunteering opportunities are just a few ways to increase morale and engagement from your workforce.

Each business is unique and has the imprint of the leadership team ingrained in the firm's culture, so it is critical to develop a tailored strategy that aligns with your company values.

For more information, click [here](#).

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## Job Board

Visit our [website](#) to check for posted job openings.

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## Geotechnical Words of Wisdom

*"The major part of the college training of civil engineers consists in the absorption of the laws and rules that apply to relatively simple and well-defined materials, such as steel or concrete. This type of education breeds the illusion that everything connected with engineering should and can be computed on the basis of a priori assumptions. As a consequence, engineers imagined that the science of foundations would consist in carrying out the following program: Drill a hole into the ground. Send the soil samples obtained from the hole through a laboratory with standardized apparatus served by conscientious human automatons. Collect the figure, introduce them into the equations, and compute the result. Since the thinking was already done by the man who derived the equation, the brains are merely required to secure the contract and to invest the money. The last remnant of this period of unwarranted optimism are still found in attempts to prescribe simple formulas for computing the settlement of buildings or of the safety factor of dams against piping. No such formulas can possibly be obtained except by ignoring a considerable number of vital factors"*

*Karl Terzaghi*

*First International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering,  
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 22 to 26, 1936*



Karl von Terzaghi  
Father of Soil Mechanics  
1883-1963

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# Safety First

## The Job at Hand

*Courtesy of State Compensation Fund of California*

Your hands and fingers are the most valuable tools on the job. In construction work, you use them for every job you do. While your hand and fingers are probably the most used part of your body, they are also the most neglected.

The first rule to preventing hand and finger injuries is to pay attention to where you are placing them. Consider how your hands and fingers could be damaged in the situation they've been placed. Is there a possibility they could be scraped, pinched, punctured, caught, crushed or burned?

Focus! Don't let yourself become sidetracked by other workers or activities around you. Before you start any job, be aware of the hazards; think through each task and safety rules.

Although each job you perform may present its own hazards, there are still some basic safety principles you should keep in mind all the time:

- Make sure all shields, guards, and safety locks are in place as they were designed!
- Remember to lockout and blockout!
- Learn how to operate your tools and equipment safely.
- Use the right tool for the job!
- Always keep your tools in good repair.
- Rotate tasks to give your hands and fingers a break.
- Use extra care when handling sharp or pointed tools, like hatchets, chisels, punches, awls, knives, and machine blades.
- Keep hands and fingers away from moving parts of tools or machinery.
- Never use your fingers to fish things out of rotating or reciprocating parts of tools and machinery. (Of course, these should be guarded)
  - Never use your hands to stop rotating parts.
  - Before lifting a load, check for nails, splinters, screws, metal banding, protrusions or other sharp or pointed objects.
  - Watch your fingers and hands when lowering heavy loads; they could get pinched.
  - Never put your hands or fingers on loads being moved mechanically.
  - Never use you fingers to test the temperatures of gases, liquids, or solids; damage can happen before your reflexes remove your fingers.
- Wear proper fitting gloves when needed or appropriate, but watch that they don't get caught in moving parts.
- Wash your hands.

Even the most cautious worker can still experience a hand or finger injury. It is important to report any injury and get the appropriate first aid or medical attention. Ignoring even a simple cut, bruise or burn may lead to a more serious injury or infection. Using common sense is the most effective safety device; use your head when you use your hands.

## State Compensation Fund of California Contact

In an ongoing effort to promote jobsite safety throughout California, CalGeo has partnered with the State Compensation Insurance Fund on the *Safety First!* program to provide our members and group participants with workers compensation insurance cost savings and provide relevant information regarding safety issues. CalGeo members interested in becoming a member of



CalGeo's "Safety First" group can contact Patty Amaya at (323) 327-5773 or [pattyamaya@scif.com](mailto:pattyamaya@scif.com). Click [here](#) to learn more.

### Cal/OSHA Consultation

If you are an employer who wishes to obtain FREE assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation, or want to learn more about what services are available, you can do so by calling the toll-free assistance number, 1(800) 963-9424. If you want to arrange an on-site visit or obtain technical information, you can contact the Cal/OSHA Consultation area office nearest your workplace by clicking [here](#), or you can email them at [InfoCons@dir.ca.gov](mailto:InfoCons@dir.ca.gov).



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