

***THE ASSOCIATION OF
GEOTECHNICAL TESTING
AUTHORITIES (QLD) INC.***

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily shared by all members of the Association of Geotechnical Testing Authorities (Qld) Inc.

Editorial

Association Members – Welcome to the 3rd and last edition of the AGTA Newsletter for 1999. As with this years previous editions, I have attempted to compile a spread of issues and articles that will hopefully invoke some interest for the reader.

With this issue you will notice a brochure on the Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Framework. It would certainly be of benefit to each member to digest it's ingredients and thus be more aware of our responsibilities within our workplace.

In "People in Profile" this edition, I had the pleasure of an afternoon of light refreshments and conversation with AGTA's No. 1 ticket holder Mr Tom McCabe of Australian Geomechanical Laboratories. Tom is one of the real gentlemen of our industry and hopefully you find my profile on this man of interest.

This being my last editorial, I would like to offer my thanks to my co-worker at Civil Quality Assurance, Lisa Phillips. Without Lisa's help on the construction of the newsletter this year, the end product of each publication would have been sadly lacking.

On a final note, I feel our newsletter is an important facet of our association, through it, we the members are informed of AGTA issues and industry interests. So please, get behind next years editor, voice your opinions through "Letters to the Editor" and send in articles of interest – ask not "What can AGTA do for me" but "What can I do for AGTA".

Have a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Millenium.

**Terry Ferguson
EDITOR**



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Lighten Up

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night, and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see." Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars." "What does that tell you?". Watson pondered for a minute.

"Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?".

Holmes was silent for a minute, then spoke. "Watson,



you dickhead. Some bastard has stolen our tent."

A Point of Interest

In an endeavour to present a newsletter of a reasonable size (and due mainly to a vacant "Letters to the Editor" section) I have created "A Point of Interest".

Subject: Short Courses Relevant to our Industry (or more to the point – a short course I attended recently)

In October this year, I attended a 3 day course conducted by NATA, it's content "Quality Management in the Laboratory". The course was presented by Mr Greg Walker and ably assisted by Miss Susan Hoffman. Greg, based out of NATA's Brisbane office, would be well known by quite a few members, through his NATA background.

Over the three day duration, I must say the course, through it's informative and interesting presentation on quality management within our laboratories certainly kept my attention and enhanced my knowledge on the subject. Courses such as this can be educational to all levels of laboratory personnel.

Society as a whole, moves technology and methodology along at a very brisk pace of recent, courses such as these do not take a lot of one's time, but can be extremely beneficial for yourself and your Company's future.

Terry Ferguson

Footnote: Information on such courses can be obtained
by contracting NATA's training services on Phone (02)

9736 8222 or Fax (02) 9743 6664.

GENERAL MEETING - AUGUST 1999

On August 23 this year, AGTA presented a General Meeting for members at the Hawken Auditorium. The central topic for the night was a debate on "Should Geotechnical Testing Authorities be Retained by the Principal or the Contractor".

The teams involved in the debate consisted of some very prominent members of the construction industry. The pro-principal team consisted of Keith McIlwain, Paul Fraser and Peter Davis whilst the pro-contractor team was represented by Hugh Morrison, Nigel Beal and David Bowler. The spirit of the debate was excellent, with many 'tongue in cheek' comments being fired from both camps. The event was chaired by Mr Pat Wilson with the shoes of the adjudicator being filled by AGTA Vice Chairman Alan Bartlett. (cont. over page)

Photo 1: The Pro-Principal team for the Debate: (From left to right) Keith McIlwain, Paul Fraser and Peter Davis.
The gentleman seated on the extreme right Mr Pat Wilson chaired the debate

Photo 2: The Pro-Contractor team consisted of (from left to right) Hugh Morrison, Nigel Beal and David Bowler

GENERAL MEETING - AUGUST 1999 (Cont.)

The debate was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience, with strong rhetoric from both sides, certainly making the adjudicator's task difficult indeed. At the end of the night a narrow points decision was awarded to the Pro-Principal team – from this writer's view, I thought the teams could not be separated until Keith McIlwain unloaded both barrels at his opposition. When the smoke cleared and Keith sat down I felt his performance got his team home by a "short half-head". To sum up the evening "If you didn't go, you missed a good night". On behalf of the AGTA committee I would like to thank all participants, and special thanks to Lexy Russell of NATA for organising the catering aspect of the night.

Photo 3: Coffey Break! Past and present Coffey International personnel enjoy a chat and refreshments prior to the Debate (from left to right) Greg Greenhalgh, John Kippen, Colin Fulcher, Pat Wilson and Neville Morrison

Photo 4: Engineering Excellence Award! Mmmm – No comment. Members enjoying the odd refreshment after the debate.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

With the end of the year upon us, it is time to reflect on what has been achieved.

The AGTA newsletter has become a great medium for communication, information and interest, with the association, thanks to the effort of the editor, Terry Ferguson.

A highlight of the year was the "Great Debate" which was very entertaining as well as informative. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the participants on a job well done.

The complaints procedure has finally been put forward, after some lengthy delays.

The Building Services Proposal has been put forward. The process from here according to the QBSA, is that the proposal will have industry input, including AGTA before being gazetted, so there will be ample time for further input.

I'd like to thank the committee for their efforts over the past year. Committee positions require commitment, not just for a month but for the full year.

The committee needs the input and comment from the members, it must be remembered that the committee positions are voluntary, and we need that comment and feed back to address issues and concerns of the members.

I urge all members to take an active part in the direction and activities of the association **get involved!**

I believe that the association has an important role to play in the Civil Construction Industry, to put forward the views and concerns of the testing sector.

There are challenges ahead, for them to be met and overcome requires the support and input by AGTA's members.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Steve Cusack
CHAIRMAN

PEOPLE IN PROFILE

In this the last instalment of 'People in Profile' for 1999, I chose to interview Tom McCabe of Australian Geomechanical Laboratories.

Tom has been involved in our industry since the mid '80's, and would be known to quite a few readers, especially those whose industry experience included time at Soil Surveys.

Thomas McCabe was born in Bathurst, New South Wales in the early 1940's. His primary school years were spent in Glen Innes after which he completed his secondary school education at a Lismore boarding college. His school days behind him, Tom entered the work force in 1959 securing a job with CSIRO, Armidale in the Mathematics and Statistics department. Three years down the track he changed departments within CSIRO and spent the next 20 years of his life in the chemistry laboratory of the Animal Physiology Division. Around 1982 Tom, his wife Margaret and their 3 children decided upon a lifestyle change and moved interstate to Queensland. For the next couple of years he tried his hand at project management on rural subdivisional developments. (It was at this time I first met the man on a construction camp out of Gladstone and I must tell you he cooks a mean whiting in beer batter!). Through this line of work, Tom met Neville Morrison and in 1985 began working in the construction materials industry by way of Soil Surveys & Exploration Pty Ltd. Tom soon found his niche in this industry, that being the triaxial room where his previous laboratory experience put him in good stead. It was during this time that Tom designed and constructed a Shrink/Swell machine that to this day is still used and has been the prototype for the construction of others. In 1994 Tom and his current partner Gavin Hamilton started Australian Geomechanical Laboratories located in the inner city suburb of Milton and their doors are still open today servicing the construction industry.

As the sun sets over Tom and Margaret's property at Camp Mountain, we finish our last beer and I put to him the same question I asked Martin and Gerry in previous interviews – 'What does the future hold for Tom McCabe?' Answer – 'Continue on with my present situation and in the coming years start to spend a little less time in the workforce and more time enjoying my family, especially the grandkids'. Good luck to you Tom, I wish you all the best.

Well that my last 'People in Profile' for this millennium and I must say chatting with Tom, Martin and Gerry about their interesting lives has been a real pleasure.

Terry Ferguson

Technical Talk - For this edition we will focus on Acid Sulphate Soils, which of recent years has become quite an important issue within the construction Industry. The following presentation has been compiled by the Department of Natural Resources. Should any member wish to obtain further information on this subject the Natural Resources contact officers details are presented on the following page.

Technical Talk (Cont.)

Industry Related News and Articles

Editors Note: Extract from Civil Contractors Federation "The Bulletin"

Industry Related News and Articles

Editors Note: Extract from Civil Contractors Federation "The Bulletin"

Useful Industry Information

Industry Related News and Articles

Extract from "The Sunday Mail": 12/9/99

ODD SPOT

Extract from "Vibratory Soil and Rock Fill Compaction"
Lars Forssblab. 1981

FOR SALE

GEOTECHNICAL TESTING EQUIPMENT

- ENDECOTT SIEVES
- CONTEST COMPACTION
MOULDS/HAMMERS
- A&D 20KG BALANCE TO 0.1gm
- CLASSIFICATION EQUIPMENT

PLUS MORE.....

ALL EQUIPMENT V.G.C.

**FOR DETAILS AND
INVENTORY
CONTACT: CARL PHILLIPS
ON 0411 416 462**

• *Food for Thought*

- RACIAL PREJUDICE
No Viet Cong ever called me Nigger
Muhammad Ali
- BUSINESS
He's a businessman...I'll make him an offer he can't refuse. *Mario Puzo, 1969*
- CIVILIZATION
Journalist: "Mr Gandhi, what do you think of modern civilisation?"
Gandhi: "I think it would be a good idea."
Mahatma Gandhi (on arrival in England, 1930)
- COMPROMISE
When you accept our views we shall be in full agreement with you. *Moshe Dayan to Cyrus Vance, 1977*
- DIETING
I went on a diet, swore off drinking and heavy eating, and in fourteen days I lost two weeks.
Joe Lewis
- GREATNESS
There is a great man who makes every man feel small. But the real great man is the man who makes every man feel great.
GK Chesterton, 1906
- HISTORY
That men do not learn much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that history has to teach. *Aldous Huxley, 1959*
- LIFE
Life is not a daily dying, not a pointless end, not an ashes-to-ashes and dust-to-dust, but a soaring and blinding gift snatched from eternity.
Irving Wallace, 1962
- THE MEEK
It's going to be fun to watch and see how long the meek can keep the earth when they inherit it.
Kim Hubbard, 1907
- POLITICS
In order to become the master, the politician poses as the servant. *Charles de Gaulle, 1970*
- PREJUDICE
There is a tendency to judge a race, a nation, or a distinct group by its least worthy members.
Eric Hoffer, 1951
- PROGRESS
What one generation sees as a luxury, the next sees as a necessity. *Anthony Crosland, 1975*
- SEX
Whoever called it necking was a poor judge of anatomy. *Groucho Marx*
- THINKING
We know what a person thinks not when he tells us what he thinks, but by his actions. *Isaac Bashevis Singer, 1978*
- TRUTH
I never give them hell. I just tell the truth, and they think it is hell. *Harry S. Truman, 1953*

Editors Favourite

- TIME
In theory one is aware that the earth revolves but in practice one does not perceive it, the ground upon which one treads seems not to move, and one can live undisturbed. so it is with Time in one's life.
Marcel Proust, 1919

Current Membership Roll Call

Membership No.	Name
001	Thomas McCabe
002	Ullman & Nolan Geotechnical
003	Civil Quality Assurance (Qld) Pty Ltd
004	Tony McDonald
005	GJ Brandon & Associates Pty Ltd
006	Amanda Macfarlane
007	South Qld Soils Pty Ltd
008	Wide Bay Geotechnical Services P/L
009	Brisbane City Council
010	Geo-Tech Temp Pty Ltd
011	Geotest Engineering Services Pty Ltd
012	Bowler Geotechnical Pty Ltd (Browns Plains)
013	Geoff Maiden Partners
014	Queensland Geotechnical Pty Ltd
015	Noel Thomas
016	Paul Thompson
017	Lloyd R Davies
018	Roadtest
019	Vimbury Pty Ltd trading as Earthtech Laboratories
020	John V Simmons
021	Soiltech Pty Ltd
022	Boral Construction Materials Country (Qld) Raw Materials Laboratory
023	Far North Qld Testing Pty Ltd
024	Golder Associates Pty Ltd
025	Soil Test Australia
026	Peter Murphy
027	H&M Testing Pty Ltd
028	Department of Natural Resources
029	Ron Richards & Partners Pty Ltd
030	Geotech (SC) Pty Ltd trading as Soil Surveys Technical Services
031	CSE (Aust) Pty Ltd
032	Gold Coast City Council
033	Strata Test Pty Ltd
034	Will V Aus
035	Kase Enterprises
036	CSR Construction Materials - Toowoomba
037	Gerald A Fitzgerald
038	Soil Engineering Services
039	Civil Tech Pty Ltd
040	Karreman Group
041	Anthony J. McKenna
042	John Wilson & Partners Pty Ltd
043	Border Tech
044	Tiaro Shire Council
045	Geo-Investigations Pty Ltd
046	Alan Bartlett
047	Chris Brincat
048	Graeme Sheppard
049	Stephen Vlatko-Rulo trading as Duke Contracting Services
050	Mark Hallett
051	Neil Lawson
052	Dennis Edwards
053	Doug Faithfull
054	Bit of a Byte
055	John Kippen
056	Col Fulcher
057	Terry Blackburn