Caves and Karst of the Helderberg Region

January 18, 2017

Speaker: Dr. Michael L. Nardacci
Hudson Valley Community College

Abstract: The talk with slide show will be an introduction to how caves form (speleogenesis), a look at some of the types of depositional formations found in them, an overview of some of the major caves of the Albany/Schoharie area, and a short history of cave exploration on this area. (Mike will also explain why you should never call a "caver" a "spelunker"--and vice-versa!)

About the Presenter: Mike Nardacci has a Ph.D. in American literature from New York University and a New York State certification to teach Earth Science with a concentration in geology. He has taught courses in both disciplines for various high schools in the Albany area, Hudson Valley Community College, and Keystone College in Pennsylvania. (continued on back)
About the Presenter (continued): He started caving in college and has explored in New York State and New England as well as in West Virginia. Besides being a long-time member of the National Speleological Society, Mike is a member of the Cave Conservancy of Hawaii and has done extensive exploration and mapping of lava tubes on the Big Island. As a member of the Cave Research Foundation he has been involved in surveying and mapping at Mammoth Cave—the world's longest known cave. Mike writes an occasional column called "Back Roads Geology" for the Altamont, NY newspaper "The Enterprise," dealing with the geology of the Helderberg area and with many countries to which he has traveled including Canada, Egypt, China, and Cambodia. Several years ago his lengthy poem "Ghosts of Floyd Collins" set in Mammoth Cave was published by the National Speleological Society's monthly magazine and he has presented readings of the poem at various locations, often at Hallowe’en.

For many years he has taught courses in cave geology and exploration for the summer program of the Helderberg Workshop in Voorheesville and for a number years ran a popular series of field programs for the Greater Capital Region Teacher Center. At present he is an adjunct teacher on the faculty of Hudson Valley Community College and continues to write and lecture in the Albany area.

Dr. Nardacci at the home site of Floyd Collins, a cave explorer who died in a section of Mammoth Cave in the 1920s.

Reservations are required by Monday

January 16, 2017

Whether attending the dinner
or only the presentation.

Register on-line at www.hmpga.org

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Cost: $10.00 for student members
$20.00 for dormant geologists
$25.00 for members
$30.00 for non-members
program only: Free

Location: Century House
997 New Loudon Road
Latham, NY 12110

Time: Social Hour 5:00pm
Dinner 6:00pm
Program 7:00pm

Dinner Sponsors receive free dinner, a display table set up for the social hour and a 5 minute presentation to the dinner audience, prior to the presentation. Please contact Jesse Vollick at jesse.vollick@obg.com for more information.
Greetings and Happy New Year!

It was good to see many of you at the HMPGA holiday party. January brings us back to our regular monthly meetings and we have a great set of speakers and interesting topics lined up through this spring. Being a long term Helderberg resident, I’m looking forward to hearing Mike Nardacci discuss the area’s karst geology at our January 18th meeting. I’ve been reading Mike’s “Back Roads Geology” in the Altamont Enterprise for years.

Our January meeting also has us bringing out our collection of HMPGA tee-shirts and pint glasses, offered for sale. These both make great gifts for any occasion.

HMPGA’s Board of Directors voted during December’s meeting to make a contribution of $500 to the Angelo Tagliacozzo Memorial Geological Scholarship fund, directed by the Northeast Section-AIPG. This initial contribution is going toward the fund’s balance, which, over the last 5 years has awarded $86,500 to 38 students of geological sciences. Your Board is discussing making additional HMPGA contributions to this fund. We could potentially make contributions to a HMPGA-attributed scholarship of some particular type, and/or apply a geographic eligibility for a student receiving HMPGA’s support. We welcome your input.

Continued on next page…

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President’s Message Continued

Finally, while I’m not a political expert or sage pundit, I am a president; so, I’ll offer this pre-Groundhog Day prognostication. My guess is that January’s inauguration could bring some changes in federal policies across broad areas, such as energy, the environment, infrastructure, etc., that trickle down and impact many in our profession. We’ll see.

As always, we hope for peace and prosperity for all.

Kevin
Members, we hope that everyone had a happy and safe celebration for the new year. We wanted to remind you that 2017 brings new opportunities to help the community as geologists. Please keep in mind that during the spring, we will have our Howe’s Cave trips where volunteers can assist local high school field trips that visit the site (dates are still being organized). We also have a high school science fair and the gem & mineral show where we can volunteer to assist at our table. If you have any interest in volunteering, please reach out to Joe Osso!
How did you become interested in Geology? I liked math and science in high school, so I picked a Physics major my freshman year at Boston U. After a year of that, I upgraded to an Undecided major, took an environmental geology class and soon switched to major in Geology. I got hooked on geology by reading through the old NYS Museum publications that I found in the BU Library, especially Goldring’s (1933) Guide to the Geology of John Boyd Thacher Park (Indian Ladder Region) and Vicinity. I grew up in this area and found that she explained a lot about places I’d been to.

What is your current position? I’ve been a hydrogeologist at Alpha Geoscience for 17 years. I work on various types of projects, such as environmental site assessments and petroleum spill investigations and remediation. I also am involved in data validation, water supply development, and occasional salt mine grouting.

Do you have a favorite rock? What is it? I have a hand specimen of Thulite that my parents brought me from their trip to Norway. It is a pink, manganese-rich zoisite. I brought it work to try to stump Severn Brown with it. Sev is one of the more knowledgeable geologists I’ve known. He immediately identified it and even had a story about a friend of his and a scheme to develop a thulite mine in Norway.

What made you decide to pursue this career path? I had worked summers for the Bethlehem Highway Department and became familiar with the town’s landfills and leachate. When I studied hydrogeology and contaminant plumes in ground water, I thought this might be the type of thing I might like to do.

What other people, interests or activities do you enjoy? My wife, Anne is a birder, and I’m a rocker. We like to hike, camp, and canoe, while she birds and I rock. The Adirondacks are a favorite destination, along with local parks and preserves. We also enjoy gardening and making lots of compost. I like to ski and golf, and don’t do enough of either. I play guitar and recently got a starter mandolin. I root for the Red Sox and all Boston teams.

Describe your most memorable experience in your profession? My most memorable experience on the pleasant side was in 1980-1981, when I was logging core to decipher fault geometries at a nuclear power plant site on the coast of Brazil.

The most memorable experience on the bizarre side was in 1989-1990, while working on New York State’s Low-Level Radioactive Waste Siting project. I was supposed to direct field investigations of three sites in Allegany County, but our efforts were successfully blocked by a lively group of protestors. At our first attempt at a site walk-over, we were escorted by the Sheriff and ended up being held captive by protesters for several hours on a 10 degree January afternoon.

After that, we had State Police escort and our field trips mostly consisted of watching people get arrested. On my last trip out, the state had obtained an injunction against the protesters, so they all wore ghoulish “Allegany No Dump” masks to hide their identities. The day ended with the State Police mixing it up with masked horsemen, a scene that depicted at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6y2GxdZ4jig.
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JANUARY GEO-CRYPTO CIPHER

CLUE: D = W each letter of the expression is substituted by another letter.

YAZV VCRZHCPYLOW ECYOFJFBW NJLVV ZV VF
ZJJ-EOCELOCR, YACW RZR PFY CTCP UPFD
DACYACO YF “FF” FO “LA” LY YAC EOFGCVVFO’V
EFJZVACR VECNZHCP FG GJFOZRL FFHZNYOZYC.

DECEMBER’S SOLUTION GEO-CRYPTO CIPHER

WHAT THE GLACIAL GEOLOGIST SAID WHEN HE CAME ACROSS A FRESH DIAMICTON EXPOSURE: TILL, WE MEET AGAIN.

Send your solutions to kphelan@alphageoscience.com
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<td>Dr. Jeffrey Chiarenzelli</td>
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<td>James Henry Chapin Professor of Geology and Mineralogy</td>
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New York State Council of Professional Geologists (NYSCPG) strives to strengthen and advance the geologic sciences as a profession, promote the protection of public health and welfare and the environment through the professional practice of geologic sciences, and create high standards of ethical conduct among its members and within the profession of geology, as well as the legal standing of geologists and their ability to practice geology in New York State by promoting the licensing of geologists in New York State through statutory regulation. www.nyscpg.org
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Buffalo Association of Professional Geologists (BAPG) conducts regular membership meetings on the third Wednesday of the month, January through June and September through November. Meetings feature distinguished speakers and interesting topics. Field trips and technical seminars sponsored by the BAPG encourage the exchange of scholarship and expertise. www.bapg.org

Central NY Association of Professional Geologists (CNYAPG) conducts regular meetings on the second Thursday of each month, unless otherwise posted, from September to May. Meetings feature dinner and distinguished speakers whose presentations invite comment and discussion. www.cnyapg.org

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