



March 2008

Volume 48, Number 9

# Upcoming Events and Activities

#### March 3 - NOGS Luncheon

\*\*\* At the Holiday Inn Downtown Superdome \*\*\*
Free validated parking in hotel garage

Dr. Gary Kinsland, Pioneer Production Endowed Professor of Geology at the Univerity of Louisiana, Lafayette, will present: "A Regional Subsurface Geological Investigation of Lower Wilcox Group Coalbed Natural Gas Potential in Northeastern Louisiana."

(See Page 7 for Abstract and Biographies)

HOLIDAY INN DOWNTOWN SUPERDOME Check with concierge or

front desk for location Lunch served at 11:30am Admission:

#### March 6-7 - 2nd Annual Louisiana Groudwater Symposium

Hosted by the Baton Rouge Geological Society. Energy Coast & Environment Building, LSU Campus, Baton Rouge. See announcement on page 19. For more information visit BRGS website http://www.brgs-la.org

#### April 5 - Super Science Saturday

11:00-3:00 at Louisiana Children's Museum. For more information or to volunteer, contact Tom Bergeon - (504)832-3772, tom.bergeon@centuryx.com

#### April 5-6 - NOGS Technical Field Seminar

Modern Transgressive Depositional Environments of the Abandoned Mississippi River Lafourche Delta Complex. See announcement on page 15.

#### April 7 - NOGS Luncheon

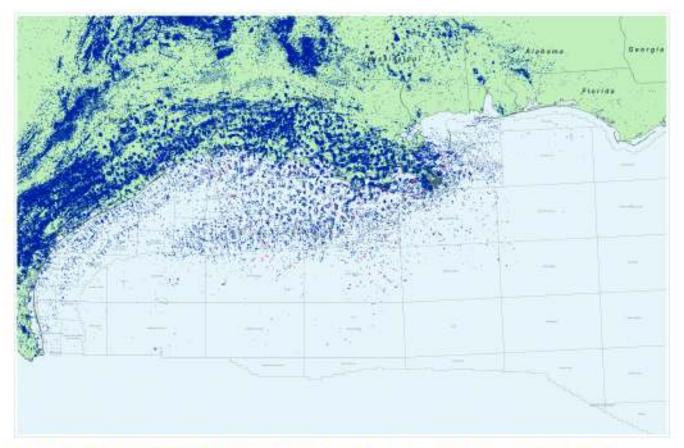
David Kring, Visiting Scientist for the Lunar Exploration Initiative, Lunar and Planetary Institute, Houston, will present: "The Chicxulub Impact Event in the Gulf of Mexico and its Environmental Effects at the K-T Boundary."

#### April 30 - NOGS Petroleum Geology for Non-Geologists Course

Shell Auditorium, One Shell Square, New Orleans. See announcement on page 21.

#### May 5 - NOGS Annual Golf Tournament

Money Hill Golf & Country Club in Abita Springs. See announcement on page 17.



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The office is located at Suite 300, 810 Union Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. Correspondence and all luncheon reservations should be sent to the above address.

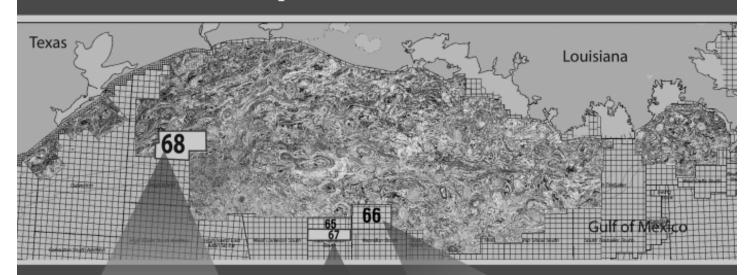
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from the President

#### Are You An AAPG Member?

For many of you, the answer to that question is, "Of course I am". Those of you who are AAPG members can skip down a few paragraphs - I have some additional thoughts to share with you.

But first, for those NOGS members who are not AAPG members (over one third of our membership), I strongly urge you to get on board. You are probably already aware of most of the benefits - the AAPG Bulletin, Explorer, discounts on the vast array of books that AAPG publishes, group insurance programs (including life, health, and disability), continuing education, and participation in a variety of conferences and exhibitions.

You may not be aware of some of the other benefits that come with AAPG membership. Members get online access to the past three issues of the AAPG Bulletin and Explorer, along with current abstracts from the AAPG meetings and lecture tours. There are seminars and materials to help members manage their careers with assessment tools and guidance on career options. There are a number of excellent online training courses, offered in modules that allow members to take continuing education from home and at their own pace. AAPG has established "Mid-Career Training Centers" in Houston, Dallas, and elsewhere that allow members to upgrade professional skills (including workstation skills).

Members also have access to the services of the AAPG Foundation Energy Resources Library. AAPG also publishes an online journal, Search and Discovery, dedicated to providing the latest geoscience information to the entire upstream petroleum community. Search and Discovery offers a rapid publication process for quality articles on earth science topics.

Most important, AAPG membership makes you a part of the world's largest professional geological society with over 30,000 members in 116 countries.

For those who are financially strapped, the dues structure is being revised beginning in July 2008 to make it easier to join AAPG or maintain membership. For those earning less than \$50,000 per year, basic dues of \$80 have been reduced to \$40, with the AAPG Bulletin being sent digitally. For those earning less than \$25,000 per year the

dues are \$20 per year, with digital versions of both the AAPG Bulletin and the Explorer.

For those who are AAPG members, I hope you will keep up your membership. In addition, I ask you to consider increasing your involvement in AAPG. I see a lot of NOGS members at AAPG conventions, but very few have volunteered to judge poster or oral sessions. NOGS members have made some excellent presentations at AAPG conventions, but I know that many more could participate in this way. The Visiting Geoscientist Program provides opportunities for students to meet with practicing geologists and discuss career options. More of our members could take part in this and share both their knowledge and the joy they have found in our profession.

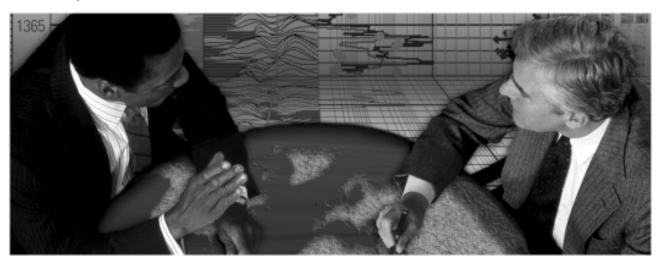
- " AAPG members may also join one or more of its three divisions, each of which provides members with additional information, focus, and networking opportunities.
- " The Division of Environmental Geosciences (DEG) is a great source of information regarding the environment and the petroleum industry. DEG is the AAPG's public voice on environmental issues and publishes the journal "Environmental Geosciences". There are a number of committees that DEG members can join.
- " The Energy Minerals Division (EMD) advances the science of geology as related to energy minerals such as coal and uranium, along with unconventional resources including coalbed methane, gas hydrate, gas shales, and geothermal. EMD is also involved with remote sensing, GIS, and energy economics. All of these areas have committees that welcome assistance.
- " The Division of Professional Affairs (DPA) speaks out on ethical, technical and legislative matters. DPA provides the means for professional certification and takes the lead in career development for AAPG members. DPA is the AAPG's voice in Washington and has produced many position statements for the association, including the AAPG statement on climate change.

And finally, a word for NOGS student members: Student membership in AAPG provides a great link into the industry along with excellent networking opportunities. In addition, Chevron is paying the dues for student members, so there is no good reason not to join.

#### Art Johnson

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#### March 3 Luncheon Presentation

\*\*\* at the Holiday Inn Downtown Superdome \*\*\*

# A Regional Subsurface Geological Investigation of the Lower Wilcox Group: Coalbed Natural Gas Potential in Northeastern Louisiana

presented by

Gary L. Kinsland, Pioneer Production Endowed Professor of Geology at the Univerity of Louisiana, Lafayette

Acknowledgement to past and present members of the Coalbed Natural Gas Research Group at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette: Richard Ball, Jessica Blosser, Scott Comegys, Will Copeland, Eric Dew, Chris Guidry, Josh Kull and Mike Sheahan.

#### **ABSTRACT**

For about five years we have had a dedicated effort at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette to map the Wilcox in northern Louisiana, to gather information about Wilcox wells and to learn about coalbed natural gas (CBNG) from the Wilcox and from other basins as well. Our purpose is to create a database, which the petroleum industry can access, so as to facilitate and enhance CBNG exploration and production in northern Louisiana. Five graduate students have digitized about 500 logs and have completed theses, which together constitute a reconnaissance study of the Wilcox of Louisiana north of latitude 31 degrees (the "bend of the

Louisiana boot"). We have divided the lower Wilcox into four intervals within which we have mapped structure, interval isochore, gross sand, net sand percentage and coal thickness. Examples of these maps will be shown.

We, three active graduate students and I, are now in the process of creating a consortium to fund detailed mapping of the structure, depositional environments, and individual coals. We are creating a digital 3D GIS within which we will maintain, interpret and display all of our data and maps. This GIS will be accessible by industry within the Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise (LITE) facility in Lafayette.

#### **BIOGRAPHY**

Gary Kinsland grew up in Oregon having been born in Eugene. He lived in Cottage Grove through the third grade except for a year as a four to five year old in an actual logging camp in the Cascade Mountains. After the third grade he attended school through high school in Coquille on the south coast. He earned a BS degree in Physics ('69) and MS ('71) and PhD ('74) in Geology (high pressure mantle mineral studies) at the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York. After a couple years of post-doc

at the University of Rochester and one year as a visiting assistant professor at Arizona State University (where he learned about geophysics...on the fly) he came to what was then The University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1977 as the mineralogist/geophysicist. He has been there (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) since and has taught and pursued research in various aspects of geophysics, petroleum geology, earth impact studies and geomorphology.

#### THE LUNCHEON RESERVATION DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 27, SO CALL THE NOGS OFFICE - TODAY!

## "And Looking Ahead..."

The next NOGS luncheon will be April 7 at the Holiday Inn Downtown Superdome. David Kring, Visiting Scientist for the Lunar Exploration Initiative, Lunar and Planetary Institute, Houston, will present: "The Chicxulub Impact Event in the Gulf of Mexico and its Environmental Effects at the K-T Boundary." Contact the NOGS office to make your reservation.

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# CALL FOR PAPERS ----

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#### TECHNICAL SESSIONS (Oral & Poster)

Energy Budgets & the Global Markets
Applied Micropaleontology
Shale Gas

Hydrates and Shallow Gas

Integrated Pore Pressure Predictions: Case Studies

Geology of the Gulf Coastal Plain: Insights into Offshore Exploration

Faults: Friend and Foe

Allochthonous Salt: Impact from Exploration to Production

Visualization of Depositional Systems

Predictive Models for Deep-Water Reservoir Distributions: The Subsalt Challenge

Old Fields-New Life: How New Technologies or New Ideas Have Made a Difference

Advances in Seismic Imaging-Impact on Exploration through Production: Case Studies

Depositional Systems: Insights from Outcrops, Shallow Seismic, or Coastal Studies
Uncertainty Assessment & Its Impact on Decision Making

Gulf of Mexico Coastal Plain Paleontology

Environmental Geology & Hydrology

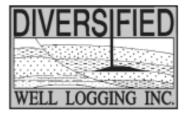
#### HOW AND WHEN TO SUBMIT:

Abstracts for oral and poster presentations should be submitted by April 15th, 2008 to <a href="www.acsmeetings.org/2008">www.acsmeetings.org/2008</a>. First drafts for the "2008 GCAGS Transactions" must be submitted by May 1th, 2008 with final manuscripts due by June 24th. Contact information for the technical session chairs, as well as instructions for authors for "2008 GCAGS Transactions", can be found at the GCAGS website <a href="www.gcags2008.com">www.gcags2008.com</a>. Due to the compressed time lines for this year's joint meeting, we ask you to contact the individual session chairs listed on our website to notify them of your interest and reserve a spot in the technical program. Abstract and manuscript submissions prior to the April 15th and May 1st respective deadlines, would be much appreciated by the "2008 GCAGS Transactions" editors. For general questions on the technical program please contact Dr. Art Donovan, the 2008 GCAGS Technical Program Chair. He can be contacted via e-mail at: art.donovan@bp.com.



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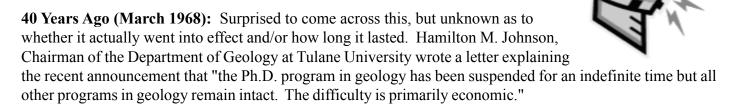
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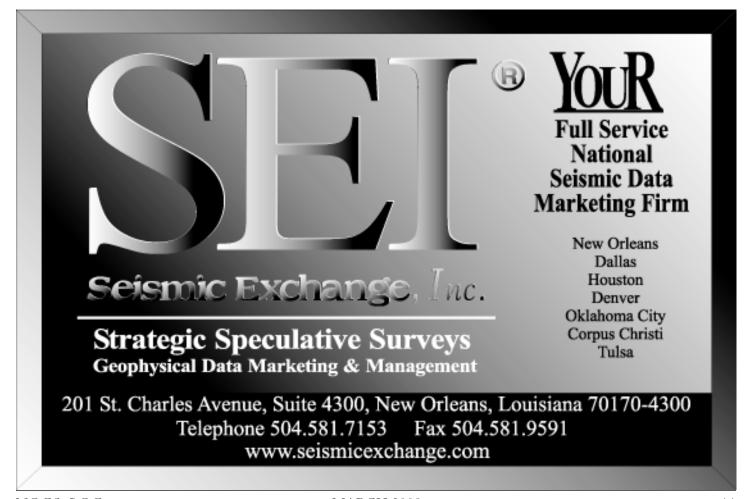
# Blast From NOGS Past

**25 Years Ago (March 1983):** Duncan Goldthwaite's President's Letter announced the formation of the Children's Museum committee to be chaired by Jules Braunstein. "Children's museums have been successful in other cities and one is being planned for New Orleans. If such an institution should come into existence here, Earth Science should be a part of it."



**45 Years Ago (March 1963):** "Rock Hound Special to Houston" read the headline for a reserved train car to AAPG in Houston. The cocktail party to warm up opening AAPG "will be anti-climactic, I assure you, as nothing can equal the fun-filled ten-hour train trip from New Orleans." \$15.05 for the round trip.

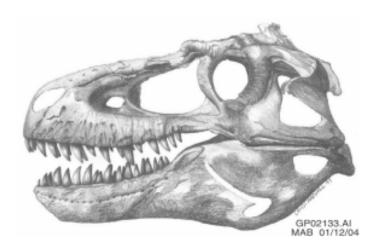
- Tim Piwowar



# **Super Science Saturday April 5th**

11:00 - 3:00 Louisiana Children's Museum

For more information or to volunteer, contact: Thomas C. Bergeon (504) 832-3772, tom.bergeon@centuryx.com



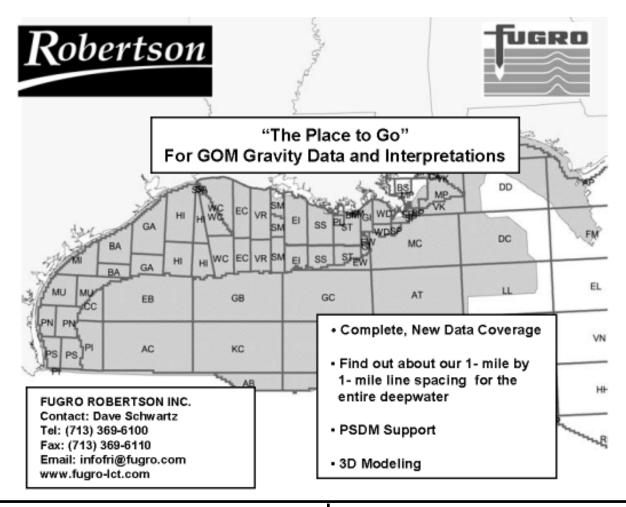
We are one month away from Super Science Saturday and need volunteers to man the various stations. We will have hands on displays of fossils, an oil finder game, and other interesting activities.

Please pass this along to other earth scientists in your organization who may not be NOGS members. We are looking for people to do 2 hour shifts 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. The stations are attention grabbing and easy to learn.

New NOGS Members February 2008

Martin E. Klein IV DQSI Corporation Geoscientist 19218 North 5th St Covington, LA 70433 985-871-7472 ext 206 Sumit Pal Chevron Reservoir Engineer 935 Gravier St New Orleans, LA 70112 713-503-6678

Rodney K. Stafford Chevron Geophysicist 935 Gravier St New Orleans, LA 70112 504-592-6122 Steve Strain INTEQ 1515 Poydras St., Ste 2400 New Orleans, LA 70112 504-561-6413





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14 MARCH 2008 NOGS LOG

### **New Orleans Geological Society**

## **Technical Field Seminar**

# Modern Transgressive Depositional Environments of the Abandoned Mississippi River Lafourche Delta Complex April 5-6, 2008

Leaders: Dr. Michael Miner and Dr. Mark Kulp, University of New Orleans

**Limit:** 18 persons (minimum 13)

Cost per attendee: \$295 (includes field guide, transportation, lodging, meals, and drinks)

**Departure:** From UNO Saturday April 5 at 7:00 am sharp

Return: To UNO Sunday April 6 at 3:00 pm

**Description:** Rapid relative sea level rise (~1 cm/yr) in the abandoned Bayou Lafourche delta complex of the Mississippi River Delta Plain (MRDP) drives transgressive processes on human timescales. Thus, the geomorphic evolution is captured on historical nautical charts, enabling a detailed stratigraphic framework to be directly linked to processes and the resulting geomorphology. A large database of historical and recent bathymetric surveys, shallow sediment cores, and high resolution shallow seismic reflection data collected over the past three decades have been applied to develop transgressive stratigraphic models for the region. Sediment cores and shallow seismic profiles will be presented on location in order to provide participants with a firsthand experience of transgressive depositional environments, facies associations, stratigraphic architecture, and bounding surfaces. We will travel from New Orleans to Port Fourchon, Louisiana in vans, then by boats to the Timbalier Islands transgressive barrier system and Terrebonne relict barrier chain. At the end of day 1 we will return to the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium field camp in Port Fourchon for a seafood boil and a good night's sleep. Day 2 will consist of a trip by van to the Cheniere Caminada beach ridges, Grand Isle, and Barataria Pass tidal inlet. Stops along the way will focus on the modern coastal zone geomorphology, shallow and deep stratigraphy, and shallow and deep processes of the Louisiana Coastal Zone.

What to Wear: The weather for this time of year is quite unpredictable so participants should be prepared for heat and sun as well as the possibility of a cold boat ride. Participants should wear hats, sunglasses, and closed-toe, rubber sole shoes. Rain gear is a necessity.

What to bring: Plenty of drinks will be provided. A field notebook, camera (with protective case), photo scale, and hand lens will be useful.

Contact: NOGS office at (504)561-8980 or info@nogs.org

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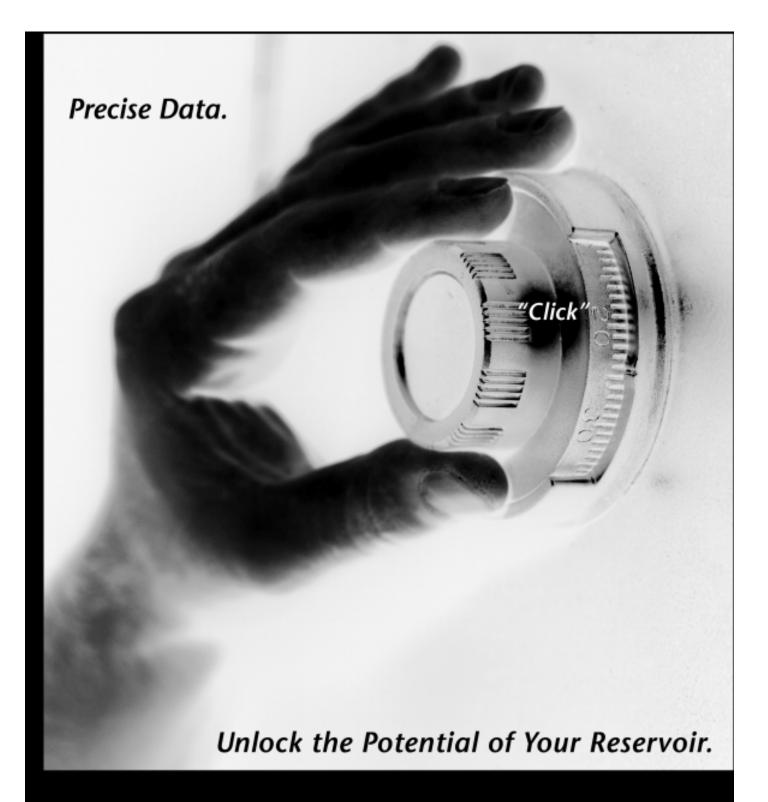
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# South Louisiana and Offshore Exploration and Production Activity

 MoRan Exploration Co. announced on January 14 its successful delineation of the Flatrock field located on OCS 310 at South Marsh Island Block 212 in ten feet of water.

The Flatrock #2 ("B" location) delineation well was spudded October 7, 2007. Located approximately one mile northwest of the discovery well, the #2 as of January 14 had been drilled to 15,400', with LWD tools indicating three resistive zones in the Rob-L section totaling 198 net feet over a combined ~315' gross interval. Drilling will continue to a PTD of 18,100' to evaluate additional targets in the Rob-L and Operc sections.

McMoRan's Co-Chairmen, James R. Moffett and Richard C. Adkerson, said, "We are pleased with the results to date from the Flatrock #2 delineation well, which confirm the potential for significant hydrocarbons in this exciting area. We look forward to commencing production from the Flatrock No. 1 discovery well in the weeks ahead and to testing additional objectives on this large acreage position."

The Flatrock #3 ("D" location) delineation well was spudded by Chevron on November 5, 2007 and as of January 14 had reached 14,800'. The well has a PTD of 18,800 feet, targeting Rob-L and Operc sands approximately 3,000' south of the discovery well.

The Flatrock #1 ("A" location) discovery well was drilled to a TD of 18,400' in August 2007. Wireline and LWD porosity logs confirmed that the well encountered eight zones totaling 260 net feet of hydrocarbon bearing sands over a combined 637' gross interval, including five zones in the Rob-L section and three zones in the Operc section. A production test in October 2007 in the Operc section FARO ~71 MMCFG/D with 739 BC/D. First production is expected in the first quarter of 2008 using the Tiger Shoal facilities in the immediate area. McMoRan has a 25.0% WI (18.8% NRI) in the Flatrock field with Plains Exploration & Production Company at 30.0% WI and Chevron at 45% WI. McMoRan's November 8, 2007 presentation to the Merrill Lynch 2007 Global Energy Conference indicated their share of the well cost was \$20 MM (\$40 MM Gross), which would result in \$460 MM net to McMoRan based on the farm-in economics using PV 10 based on Ryder Scott "3P" reserve estimates for Flatrock, with estimates of future development costs and forward pricing as of July 1, 2007.

McMoRan controls approximately 150,000 gross acres in the Tiger Shoal/Mound Point area (OCS 310/Louisiana State Lease 340). McMoRan has made several discoveries in this important area, including Flatrock, Hurricane, Hurricane Deep, JB Mountain, and Mound Point. McMoRan has multiple additional exploration opportunities with significant potential on this large acreage position.

Activity is picking up in the moribund market for shallow-water rigs on the GoM shelf.
 Seasonal demand and higher gas prices are driving the activity increase. However, full recovery is not expected until later in the year, analysts said.

Near-record supplies of natural gas in the U.S., largely due to the success of "resource plays"; e.g., the Barnett Shale, dampened demand for jackups in the GoM. Consequently, many rig owners moved their rigs to international markets where the equipment commands a higher dayrate.

However, natural gas prices have rebounded above \$8/MCF, and hurricane season has ended, so more energy companies are contracting jackup rigs, albeit at flat to lower dayrates.

"I think we're in the early stages of a pickup in activity there," said Mike Breard, energy analyst with investment advisory firm Hodges Capital Management. "But until you get the idle rigs back to work you won't see an increase in day rates." Breard said it was conceivable that dayrates, currently in the \$50-60,000 range could bounce back to \$75-80,000 by the end of the year if natural gas prices stay high.

The number of jackups contracted in the Gulf of Mexico has risen to 56 from 51 in mid-December, while the number of idle rigs fell to 7 from 13, according to data in a research note from Lehman Brothers. "In our view, this could be an important early sign of stabilization in the market," Lehman wrote.

Even with this potential upswing, in the near term, offshore drillers with exposure to the market including Hercules Offshore Inc., Rowan Co., and Pride International Inc., "might see some earnings volatility" due to weakness in the GoM shallow water, Calyon Securities said in a note to clients. In early January, Lehman cut its target price and earnings per share estimates on Hercules, which has the largest drilling fleet in the GoM. Lehman cited weakness in that market and increased time the equipment spent in shipyards.

"If you are a U.S. Gulf of Mexico company, it's going to be tough," said Joe Agular, analyst with Johnson Rice. "I really don't think a lot of people are looking for a recovery now, so if it happened, it would be a big positive surprise."

- Paul Post

#### PETROLEUM GEOLOGY FOR NON-GEOLOGISTS

The New Orleans Geological Society is presenting a one day course entitled "Petroleum Geology for Non-Geologists," **8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday April 30, 2008** in the Shell Auditorium, One Shell Square, 701 Poydras St., New Orleans. The course will consist of a brief introduction to Basic Geology, followed by a review of how oil and gas are formed, how they are concentrated into reservoirs, the geological and geophysical methods used in exploration, and an overview of drilling and completion practices.

This course should be of significant benefit and interest to anyone who in one way or another works with geologists and geological data, such as land personnel, administrative staff, draftsmen, and computer programmers and processors.

Instructors will be Duncan Goldthwaite, Consulting Geologist; Robert Branson, Consulting Geologist; Bruce Robertson, Consulting Geologist; and Devi Subramaniam, Drilling Engineer, Chevron. Cost will be \$35.00 per participant. Course notes and mid-morning refreshments will be provided.

Those interested can register by sending a check for \$35.00, payable to NOGS, to:

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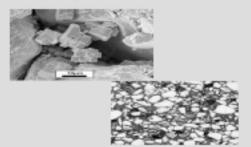


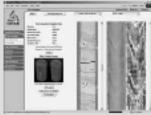
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# **New Orleans Geological Auxiliary News**

It has been a busy year for the members NOGA. It seems as if it was only yesterday, (in fact it was last July) when the Planning Committee met at my home to discuss and arrange the "Social Calendar" for the 2007-2008 Events! Seven months later and only two events left...

We started off the year with a wonderfully delicious luncheon at Camille and Jim Yeldell's home. We welcomed two new members, Dawn Riley and Ana Cerniglia, and we are all looking forward to seeing these two ladies more often. Our November Fall Luncheon (although it felt like summer), we dined at LeParvenu, with an entertaining and informative speaker and author, Dr. Jane Stennet.

With heartfelt thanks to Bill Whiting for his dedication, hard work and enthusiasm as Entertainment Chairman for NOGS. The Kick-Off Party at the Contemporary Arts Center and the Christmas Party at Cannon's gave me the opportunity to work with Bill. I saw first-hand, his efforts and success as an Event Planner and a "Party Animal". Bill will be a tough act to follow, but will also make a great President for NOGS. Good luck Bill...

Continuing onto February with our yearly "Northshore Trek" to Dakota's with a fabulous lunch and an interesting, as well as educational, guest speaker, Cynthia Albert associated with the BBB, informing us of the latest "scams" we face daily. The "Social" event of the year will be April 5th at the home of (once again!) Ann and Louis Gilbert. We are very blessed to have Ann on our Board and she is so gracious and giving in offering their home for this festive and fun night (hope Louis knows)...

This month you will be receiving in the mail, the Election Ballot for the 2008-2009 slate of officers to be voted upon. Thanks to Beverly Kastler, Beverly Christina, Judy Sabate and Amber Klekamp in joining me, in not only recommending the list of Board Members to be nominated, but for the nominees accepting the positions. We are all grateful to these ladies and appreciate their time, talents and desire to serve NOGA.

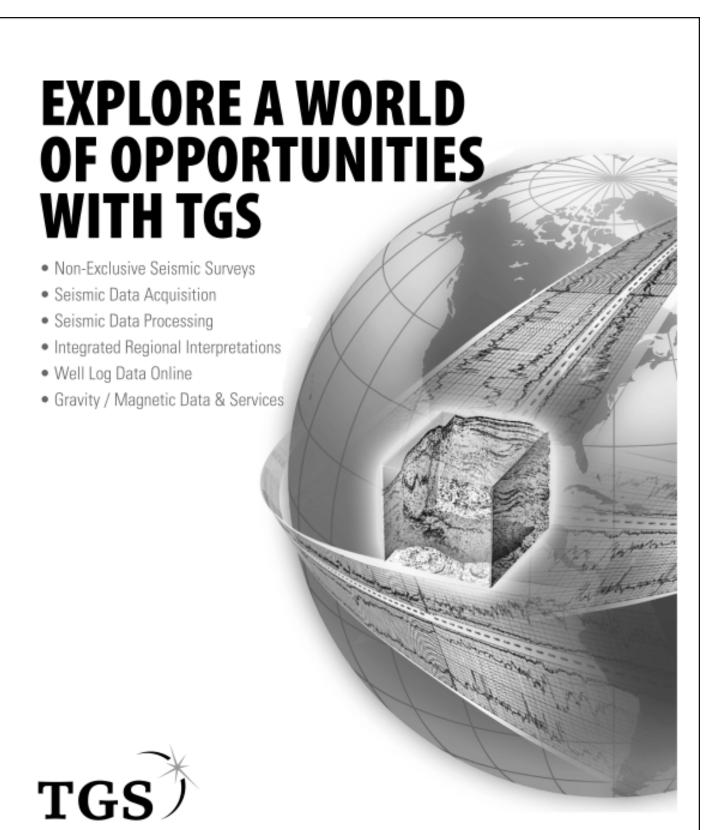
Thanks to all of you for your friendship and dedication to our Association.

See you at our next event!

Susie Baker President

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# INFOTIDBITS

• Agriculture Altering Mississippi River Water Chemistry: A recent article in the journal Nature entitled "Anthropogenically enhanced fluxes of water and carbon from the Mississippi River" attributes a large increase in bicarbonate flux in the river to an increase in discharge from agricultural lands. The findings of the NSF-funded study were based on over 100 years of Mississippi River water chemistry data collected at the Carrollton and Algiers Water Purification Plants, operated by the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans. Alkalinity is measured at these locations to determine the amount of lime to add as drinking water is processed for the city. Dissolved inorganic carbon as bicarbonate occurs naturally in rivers as a product of chemical weathering, however during the past 50-years the use of agricultural lime and other fertilizers has increased concentrations and discharge beyond natural levels. The authors note that changes in bicarbonate force compensating changes in other ions such as calcium and silica, and that riverine concentrations of other elements present in fertilizers (nitrogen and phosphorous) are undoubtedly being affected by increased agricultural runoff.

From: Raymond, P.A, et al., 2008, Nature v. 451, p. 449-452.

• Old Faithful Geyser Live! Yellowstone National Park has installed a full-motion, live-streaming video webcam near Old Faithful Geyser that also points to several other geysers in the park when they are erupting. The website also features panoramas of the Old Faithful area, summaries on geothermal features, and animations of how geysers work and the anatomy of a geyser. Herds of bison are often present grazing in the area. To watch Old Faithful Live go to: http://www.nps.gov/yell/photosmultimedia/yellowstonelive.htm

(There is no artificial light at the geyser so the webcam only works during daylight hours.)

• NASA's MESSENGER spacecraft, which is an acronym for MErcury Surface, Space ENvironment, GEochemistry, and Ranging, made its first flyby of Mercury on January 14 after a 3.5-year journey of over 2 billion miles. Instrumentation aboard the spacecraft includes a dual imaging system that consists of wide and narrow-angle imagers for mapping surface features, gamma-ray and neutron spectrometer for use in mapping radioactive elements on the surface, a magnetometer to map the magnetic field of the planet, a laser altimeter for topographic mapping, an atmospheric spectrometer to measure abundance of atmospheric gasses, and a "Radio Science" tool that uses the Doppler effect to measure slight alterations in the spacecraft's orbital velocity providing a detailed account of Mercury's mass distribution. Topographic observations included the mapping of steep fault scarps that encircled large portions of the planet and a series of recent impact craters. The spacecraft is also equipped with sensors to measure ultraviolet emissions of the sodium rich exosphere and "tail" which extends more than 25,000 miles behind the planet. The MESSENGER is slated for two more flybys that are to be followed by an extensive orbital mission. To view the frequently updated image archive and for more info on the MESSENGER mission go to:

http://www.nasa.gov/mission\_pages/messenger/multimedia/index.html

- Mike Miner

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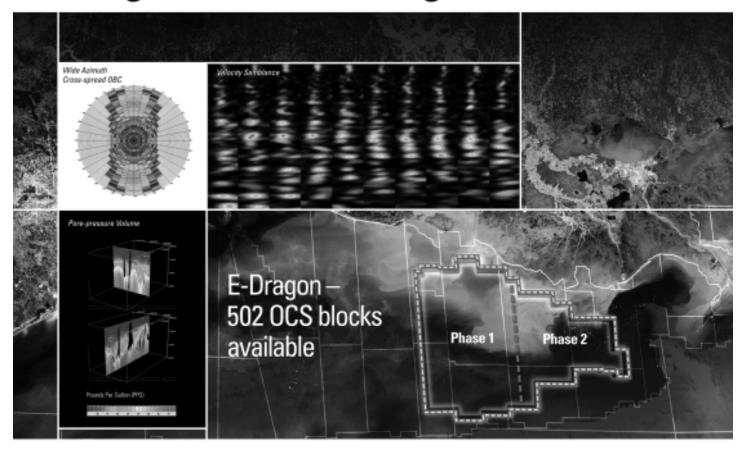
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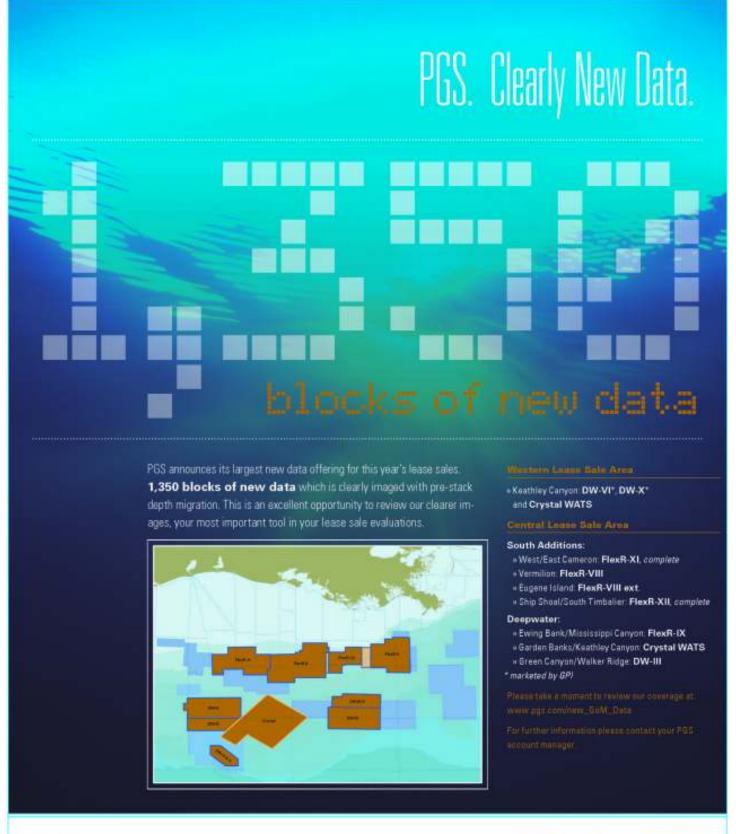
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