

GCSSEPM NEWS



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The President's Column

Greetings from Dallas! Summer is over and our summer-interns are back to campuses equipped with new passions and zests for what the Petroleum Industry has to offer along with the appreciation of the contributions we make toward our increasing understanding of earth systems. Additionally, many companies have extended offers for full-time employment to their interns and serve to strengthen our industry's ability to sustain the ongoing workload and growth that we all recognize. However is it enough given the demographics that we all encounter every day? Hallway talk used to be about playing ball after work and is now more commonly about health care for our aging parents and health issues currently facing our co-workers. I am rather stunned that I turn 50 next year and yes I can hear many folks chuckling that 50 is not really old (my students would beg to differ as my hiking boots are older than any one of them!)

and I have quickly decided that I agree with them!

So where does industry stand on our efforts? What are we doing differently to ensure that not only are we getting the students we need, but also are their enough Universities equipped with instructors that have either both industry focused research and or industry experienced professors? Are we going to sit quietly and hope things get better? As an industry and as individuals, we need to give something back to our university systems and not be so passive and behind the scenes during our annual pilgrimages to our selected universities. It reminds me of how poorly as an industry we do educating the public on the science behind the exploration and development of oil and gas. One just needed to watch the morning news cast live from a gas station during rising prices where they interview people criticizing our industry for prices without the vaguest

idea of how gas even gets to the station for consumption. Often we see excellent graduate students with little to no background in subsurface petroleum geology, engineering and minimal understanding of depositional systems and associated processes. This is not to say some of the larger departments aren't providing this, but overall is cause for concern when especially just looking at the numbers of students needed. This fall as companies prepare to return to campuses, we need to advocate being proactive in these departments and looking for ways to support their efforts in attracting the students to our industry as well as supporting the efforts of faculty in building a program that is in line with our industry research efforts. Larger companies are doing this on several campuses, such as Chevron where at the Colorado School

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Highlights

The GCSSEPM News is published three times a year by the Gulf Coast Section Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Contact Lana Ann Czerniakowski, GCSSEPM Secretary at (713) 775-5764 or Lana.Czerniakowski@murphyoilcorp.com, or contact your local business representative.

Visit the GCSSEPM Website at www.gcssepm.org for Section and Foundation News and Information.

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Announcing

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GCAGS-GCSSEPM Annual Convention



A Fusion of Geology and Technology

September 27th - 29th, 2009 • Shreveport, Louisiana

59th Annual Meeting of the
Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies
and the

56th Annual Meeting of the Gulf Coast Section SEPM

For updated convention information visit
www.gcags2009.com or www.gcags.org

of Mines they established and funded the Chevron Center of Research Excellence. This type of program is a great example of what industry can do to work with universities to leverage from each other's expertise and provide both organizations with opportunities to improve their respective capabilities, better achieve their research goals, and attract high quality students. Not only do the individual company and school benefit, but all of us who interact with the university benefit from such a relationship. Let's do more of this and not continue to hire the researchers and professors from out of their respective universities, but rather support them and collaborate with them

to ensure we are getting the best and brightest for our ever changing highly technical industry.

At the end of the month the 59th Annual GCAGS/GCSSEPM Convention will be held in the historic town of Shreveport, Louisiana — a town that was once the capital of Louisiana (1863-1865) during the American Civil War. This year's theme, "A Fusion of Geology and Technology," is timely for the needs facing the industry in its quest for producing and development of hydrocarbons in more complex and unconventional type reservoirs. This year we will combine the GCAGS and GCSSEPM luncheons into an All-convention luncheon to

attract larger numbers of attendees and foster continued development between our societies. The speaker will be Skip Hobbs, Managing Partner of Ammonite Resources Company whose title is "The Future of the Global Industry: Resources, Challenges and the Geoscience Workforce". Just prior to the opening of the Icebreaker, I invite you to join us on Sunday evening, September 27th, at 5:30 p.m. for our opening awards ceremony, where we will honor several of our outstanding colleagues and friends, Michael J. Nault and Michael J. Styzen, will both receive the 2009 GCSSEPM Honorary Membership Award for their outstanding and continued contributions to GCSSEPM. Since 1981, Michael J. Nault has served as GCSSEPM Judging & Awards Chairman for the GCAGS convention for 27 of the last 30 years, including this year in Shreveport. Michael J. Styzen's involvement with GCSSEPM began as a volunteer, moved to officer and ended up as a trustee. Mike has been a Trustee of the GCSSEPM Foundation since 2002. In the middle of all those section activities, Mike served as the GCSSEPM Program Chair for the GCAGS Convention in 1997. Finally, Dr. John M. Armentrout will receive the prestigious Doris Malkin Curtis Award for his career contributions to the development of new concepts for understanding the application of biostratigraphy within the Gulf of Mexico Basin. Dr. Armentrout's name is virtually synonymous with "applied biostratigraphy" and we are pleased to recognize his tremendous contributions to our understanding deep-water systems, as well as his global understanding of stratigraphic concepts.

Later this year, GCSSEPM will host the 29th Annual GCSSEPM Foundation Bob F. Perkins Research Conference, "Unconventional Energy Resources: Making the Unconventional Conventional," to be held December 6-9, 2009, in Houston, Texas, at the venerable Houston Marriott Westchase. Look forward to seeing everyone this fall and lets continue to make a difference.

John Wagner

Nexen Petroleum U.S.A.
john_wagner@nexeninc.com

The Director's Chair

Our meeting this year is related to what is called unconventional resources. The term unconventional is rather funny in a way because what is unconventional now will probably be conventional later. One target, the Austin chalk, is a good example of a radical unconventional play that is now conventional. In some companies, so much effort is being spent on what is called resource plays that one could argue unconventional refers to hydrocarbon accumulations in porous and permeable sandstone reservoirs trapped by shale or salt. Although it is certainly true that work stations and 3D seismic have changed the way we explore, the perfection of horizontal drilling techniques has significantly changed our exploration goals. To put it simplistically, we have eliminated the middle man (sandstone reservoir) and now produce directly from the source.

Although exploration goals have changed, exploration philosophy has not changed: every exploration VP is still concerned with making his mark by significantly increasing reserves. This not only makes The Company happy, it impresses the Stock Analysts no end, and they, of course, are the major decision makers on how successful a company is. This depresses me no end, so let's change the subject.

Last year, we had a wonderful program that few people attended; I know not why. It appears now that we will have another

excellent program and registration is five weeks ahead of 2008. I hope this trend continues. This will be the second time that we will have only a two day conference and we have not raised prices for this reason, although I can guarantee our costs will be higher. I suspect we will have more two day conferences in the future. However, it appears that the 2010 conference will require a minimum of 2 1/2 days.

Membership continues to be fairly consistent. We have recently gone through the agonizing process of updating Section by-laws and officer duties. We have even reached an understanding with the GCAGS as to our relationship with regard to the annual convention. We are now starting the process of revising the Foundation by-laws, which have remained unchanged since 1980. One important "improvement" will be to change the name of the Foundation from The Gulf Coast Section, Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists Foundation to GCSSEPM Foundation. Everyone calls us the latter; unfortunately the IRS does not agree. This changeover will be very interesting.

I hope all of you will be able to attend the Shreveport convention as well as our December conference. See you then.

Dr. Norman C. Rosen

Executive Director
GCSSEPM Foundation

GCSSEPM FOUNDATION
ED PICOU Fellowship Grant For
Graduate Studies in Earth Science

Programs and Rules for 2010

Founded in 1981, the GCSSEPM Foundation is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization whose primary objective is to promote the science of stratigraphy in the Gulf Coast region through research in sedimentary petrology, reservoir quality, paleontology, and any other related geological and geophysical fields, especially as it relates to petroleum geology.

Among the activities which the Foundation may engage in are:

- Conduct research directly or through promotion, assistance, encouragement, or support of studies and research in the field of stratigraphy and in the science related thereto;
- Dissemination of information relating to stratigraphy and related fields through lectures, seminars, research conferences, symposia, publications, educational courses, teaching aids, and by other means and material;
- To carry on programs of continuing education in stratigraphy and related studies;
- To assist in career guidance to persons interested in stratigraphy and related studies;
- To assist public and private schools and colleges and universities and technical schools in teaching and education in the field of stratigraphy and related fields.

Therefore, we are hoping to support students whose thesis or dissertation is related to our primary objective. We are primarily concerned about quality of work; however, given two works judged of equal merit, preference will be given to the Gulf Coast Basin. Maximum grant will be for \$2500.

Interested students should submit:

1. A short description of their proposed work, not to exceed 4 pages (in type no smaller than 11 point and with standard margins), in digital format (Word, Word Pro, etc.).
2. A list of expenses and other support should be included in digital format.
3. The student's advisor should write an appropriate document of support in written format.
4. We also require a short biography of the student as well as a digital picture. All of the above should be submitted to:

Dr. Norman C. Rosen
Executive Director
GCSSEPM Foundation
2719 S. Southern Oaks Drive
Houston, TX 77068

Submission of a proposal to the GCSSEPM indicates acceptance of the following conditions:

1. The GCSSEPM Foundation will be acknowledged in the work.
2. This money is being granted for the defraying of the cost of thesis/dissertation work associated with a degree program only. In the event that this work is not done, the money must be returned to us.
3. We request a note at six (6) month intervals letting us know about the progress of the research. The first such note will be due (i.e., posted) by December of the year in which the award is granted
4. You will submit two notes (expanded abstracts) for publication in our GCSSEPM News Letter. The first will refer to the goals of your study; the proposal for the grant in general will be used. The second will be a summary of results of the work after completion.
5. If the topic is appropriate for submittal to the GCAGS-GCSSEPM, we request that you present your work at a GCAGS-GCSSEPM convention.
6. We request a 2-3 panel poster display at a GCSSEPM Research Conference after completion of your work and after you have received your degree. You would not be required to be there (although we will be pleased if you do come); the display is to help us show case the grant program in order to attract more corporate donations for the program.

Failure to comply with these terms may result in our refusal to consider future proposals from students of your professor and university. (Please make your advisor aware of this.)

News from the Business, Student and Corporate Representatives

Editor's Note: As a continuing feature we will include news highlights from the various areas. The business and student representatives from each district and various corporate representatives have provided these items.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY NEWS

For the second year in a row, two AU students have been awarded Alabama Geological Society (AGS) scholarships. James Thomka and Billie Jean Palmer have received Newton and Winefordner scholarships, respectively. James will use his scholarship to facilitate his MS thesis research on the genesis of a Pennsylvanian crinoid Lagerstätte in the Barnsdale Formation, northeastern Oklahoma. Billie's award will help complete her MS thesis project involving geophysical detection of karst and other solution features formed in the Chewacla Marble.

Dr. Mark Steltenpohl has been awarded an Auburn University Alumni Professorship for a 5-year term, beginning with the 2009-10 academic year. The Alumni Professorships reward faculty members who have been recognized by their peers and colleagues as making outstanding and exceptional contributions to the University's academic programs. Mark certainly deserves this long overdue recognition.

DEVON ENERGY NEWS

On June 7th, Nancy Engelhardt-Moore officially became SEPM's Councilor for Paleontology at AAPG in Denver. In her new role, she is the chair of the Raymond C. Moore Medal Selection Committee and the Outstanding Paper Selection-Palaios Committee. Nancy has appointed Pete McLaughlin and Michael Henderson as at-large members of the Moore Medal Committee who join Jeff Lukasik and Carlton Brett.

In June, Devon consolidated its Gulf and International Divisions into the new Offshore Division. This consolidation resulted in a staff reduction which affected primarily the two merging divisions. Devon was once again recognized as one of Calgary's "Best Places to Work." In the August 2009 issue of *Avenue Magazine*, the company is cited as one that con-

tinues to be tops in its category and for its small-company vibe and culture of volunteerism.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON NEWS

At the University of Houston, several geological sciences graduate students are working on or have recently completed their research on various features of the Gulf of Mexico. MS graduate Megan Brock Casillas has completed her research examining the transition of carbonate beach sands to beach rock along the South Texas Coast, comparing composition texture and propensity for early diagenesis. Ugo Odumah completed her MS on an outcrop study of the depositional environments, petrology, in the Oligo-Miocene Catahoula Formation, in Walker County, Texas, and focuses on reconstructing paleohydraulics using a variety of proxies. MS graduate Cecilia R. Ramirez, used remote sensing to examine active surface faults in Fort Bend County, Texas to determine the significance of these surface hazards. MS candidate Derek Rice is completing his evaluation of cores from the Brazos River prodelta to better understand the relationship between flooding events, which deliver distinctively red-colored Brazos mud to the shelf compared to the along-shelf flux of grey-Mississippi derived clay, that is also trapped in the Brazos system. PhD graduate Armando Altamira examined the role of the Northern Caribbean Plate Boundary Zone in concentrating movement between the Americas during the

last 70 million years. MS candidate Marc Taylor is looking at ozone levels in Houston, Texas, and determining how much of the ozone is attributed to stratospheric ozone events. PhD candidate Felipe Lozano, and MS candidate Patricia Lee are working on detailed seismic stratigraphic and geomorphologic analysis of shelf edge deltas off the coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Their projects involve using 3D seismic to understand how salt tectonics have affected the internal geometries of deltaic deposits within a shelf- mini-basin province. MS graduate Grigoriy Perov has completed his research in the same region.

Several of these students rely on Professor Janok P. Bhattacharya for guidance. Dr. Bhattacharya, the Robert Sheriff Professor of Sequence Stratigraphy, is the head of a consortium that focuses on research not only in the Gulf of Mexico, but also the Ferron Sandstone in Utah and the Gallup Sandstone in New Mexico. In addition to the work being done by students, the faculty at the University of Houston has experienced a number of changes as well, including a name change to the Department of Earth and Atmospheric sciences, which reflects our growing atmospheric science program. Ten new faculty members have joined the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences including: Robert Stewart, professor of geophysics and director of AGL; Christopher L. Liner, professor of geophysics and reflection seismology; Leon Thomsen, research professor in geophysics, Evgeny Chesnokov, associate professor of geophysics, Jolante Van Wijk, assistant professor in geodynamic; Xun Jiang assistant professor in atmospheric sciences, Liming Li, assistant research professor in dynamics of planetary atmospheres; Al Brandon, associate professor in isotope geochemistry, and John Stormer, research professor in mineralogy.

Lost Members

We no longer have contact information for the following individuals. If you can provide information please contact Johanna Moutoux at (713) 961-8367 or Johanna.moutoux@bhpbilliton.com

- Didier Arboulie
- Garth E. Syhlonyk
- Duncan W. McMaster

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UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS NEWS

Geology students at UNO are involved in many different projects within the fields of Sedimentology and Stratigraphy. Graduate student research projects vary from ancient sequence stratigraphy in the Book Cliffs of Utah to characterization of Late Quaternary sediments of the Mississippi River incised valley. Other studies include analysis of barrier islands and beach ridges as modern analogues of petroleum reservoirs. Another study involves stratigraphic correlation of well logs with seismic data sets in the Garden Banks Leasing Area. Typically each fall or spring there is a field trip for students in the stratigraphy class to Arkansas to examine the Paleozoic deepwater, shelf and shelf edge depositional systems. UNO has an active student chapter of AAPG. One of the activities of the chapter is to invite guest/distinguished lecturers to give presentation at UNO throughout the academic year. As the University of New Orleans continues to recover from the damages of Katrina and geoscience enrollments climb, more opportunities for students will become available in the fields of Sedimentology and Stratigraphy

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA NEWS

The educational program focused on aspects of the Gulf of Mexico and analogs remains strong in the University of Oklahoma, with a number of students conducting a variety of thesis topics. M.S. student Jonathan Funk is quantifying the various types of deepwater channel margins from a variety of outcrops for his M.S. thesis. He is focusing his research on demonstrating the significant effects on simulated reservoir performance of small scale heterogeneities at channel margins that are often deleted during the upscaling process. Ph.D. student Supratik Sarkar is conducting an in-depth sequence stratigraphy/reservoir characterization study of the northern Chicontepec field, Mexico, which offers a number of different challenges than occur in the southern field area. Supratik will also be cataloging and quantifying the seismic attributes of different deepwater architectural elements. In December, Gustavo Diaz completed his M.S. degree by accomplishing a seismic and sequence stratigraphic analysis in the southern part of the field. M.S. student Diana Parada is finishing her thesis on the 3D seismic stratigraphy and geomorphology of Tertiary strata

in the western Gulf of Mexico. She is integrating biostratigraphy, well logs and seismic data in order to generate a seismic and sequence stratigraphic framework of a systematic vertical succession of deep water mass transport complexes, sheet sands and channel levee strata partially contained within a submarine canyon. Finally, Gloria Romero finished her Ph.D. dissertation on the sea floor surficial geology and processes on the offshore Magdalena submarine fan system, Colombia. Through her work she was able to recognize four distinct sediment distribution patterns which vary according to the local tectono-stratigraphic setting on and adjacent to the fan. Her model has significant application to deepwater exploration that is increasing in the offshore Colombia Caribbean.

There is a major unconventional gas shale research program involving many students in the OU Institute of Reservoir Characterization. Although studies have focused on the mid-continent Barnett and Woodford Shales, the integrated rock/well log/seismic workflow that has been developed is equally applicable to Gulf Coast shales such as the Haynesville.

Gulf Coast Section – Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL

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