

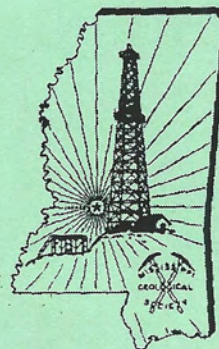
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**MISSISSIPPI
GEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY
BULLETIN**

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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~

Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

This being my first letter, I want to let you know that I look forward to serving as MGS President for the coming year and, along with the rest of the Board, have been working through the summer months getting ready for this year.

With the help of Lindsey Stewart, a very capable and talented Board has been assembled. Serving as First Vice President will be Bob Schneeflock of Paramount Petroleum. Bob will also serve as President of the Boland Scholarship Fund. Karl Kaufman with Valioso Petroleum will be our Second Vice President and will also be in charge of our monthly speakers. Please let Karl know of any potential speakers or topics that would benefit the Society. James Starnes, last year's President, will stay on as Secretary. John Warner with the Office of Geology will serve as Treasurer. Jo Everett and Lindsey Stewart will be our bulletin editor and publisher which they have so unselfishly continued to do for the last several years. Thanks to all of you for volunteering your time and effort.

On Thursday, September 22, we will kick off the year with our Fall Barbeque. The venue for this event has been changed to the beautiful new Jackson Yacht Club on the Ross Barnett Reservoir. We will get started at 5:00 p.m. and there will be plenty of barbeque and beer as well as a cash bar. Also, on display will be a Smackover Core from Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County, Alabama. If you have not kept up with this

play, to date Midroc has completed 22 Smackover oil wells. This discovery should be encouragement to all exploration geologists in this area that there are still large oil and gas fields to be found. We want to thank Mr. Dudley Hughes for his help in making this core available.

In closing, I want to mention the loss of Paul O'Malley. Paul was not only a dedicated supporter of this Society but also of many community services in the Natchez area. He was a perfectionist in core analysis and always went the extra mile in making sure his clients were satisfied. He will be missed by many.

See you at the barbeque.

Todd Hines

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"When in doubt, make a fool of yourself. There is a microscopically thin line between being brilliantly creative and acting like the most gigantic idiot on earth. So what the hell, leap."

Cynthia Heimel



Jackson Yacht Club

Thursday, September 22, 2005

The Society is hosting its annual 2005 Fall Barbecue at the newly renovated (and beautiful) Jackson Yacht Club, located on the southwest shore of the Ross Barnett Reservoir in Madison County, Mississippi (just north of Jackson).

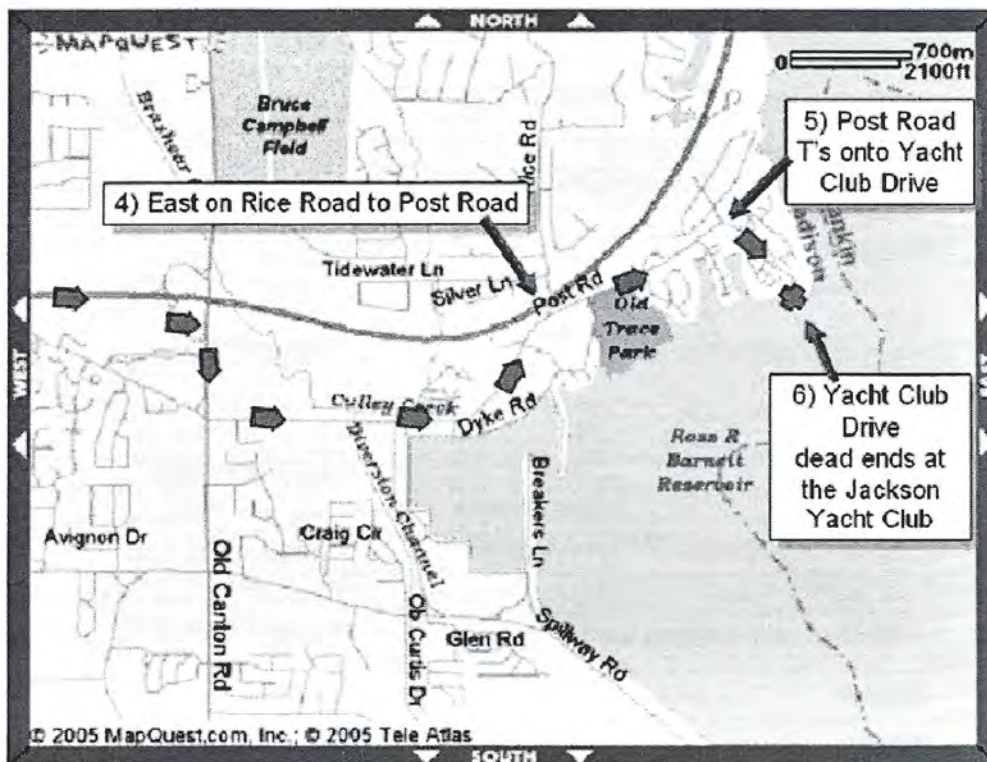
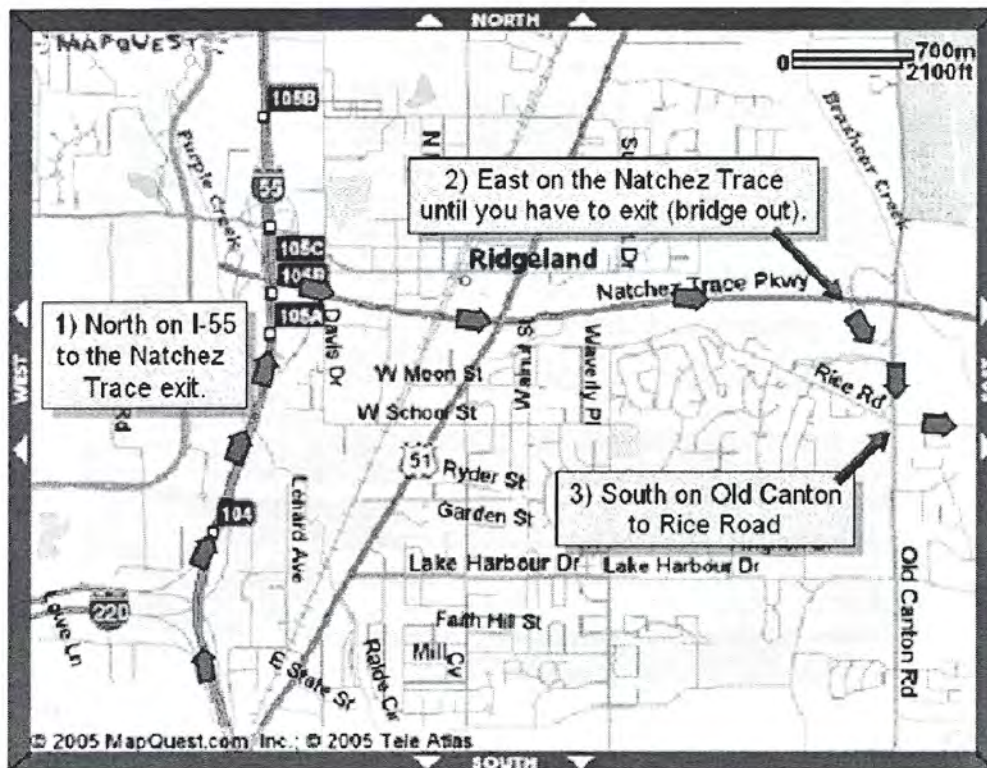
Festivities will begin at 5:00 p.m. and run until 8:00 p.m.

Cost: \$15 per member/guest and \$5 per student

As usual, there will be plenty of barbecue, cole slaw, and beer. A cash bar will also be available. In addition, there will be a diamond core of the Smackover from Little Cedar Creek Field on display. Event sponsorships are available; if you or your company would like to become a Fall Barbecue Sponsor, please contact Bob Schneeflock at bsppc@bellsouth.com.

*** If you plan to attend the Fall Barbecue, please let the Society know by e-mailing Todd Hines at Thines1360@aol.com. ***

Driving North or South on I-55: Exit I-55 at Natchez Trace Parkway (exit #105A); turn right (east) to Tupelo, continue 2 miles to Madison/Ridgeland exit (just before bridge under repair); turn right and continue to stop sign and turn right (south) on Old Canton Road; continue to traffic light (0.2 mile) and turn left (east) at traffic light on Rice Road; continue 1.3 miles to Post Road and turn right; continue to Yacht Club Road (0.7 mile) and turn right on Yacht Club Road and continue to Club at end of road.



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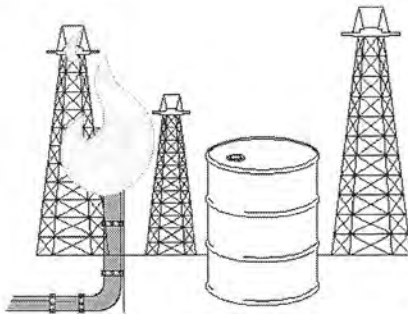
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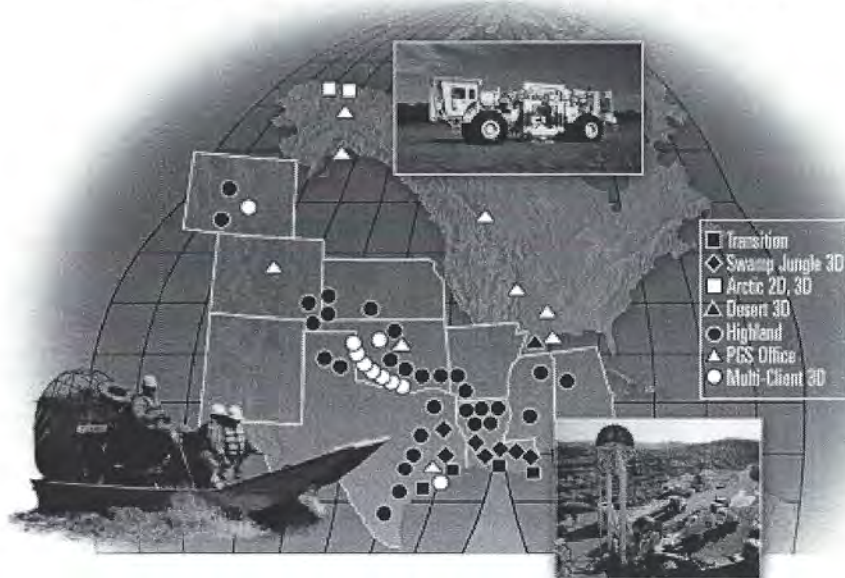
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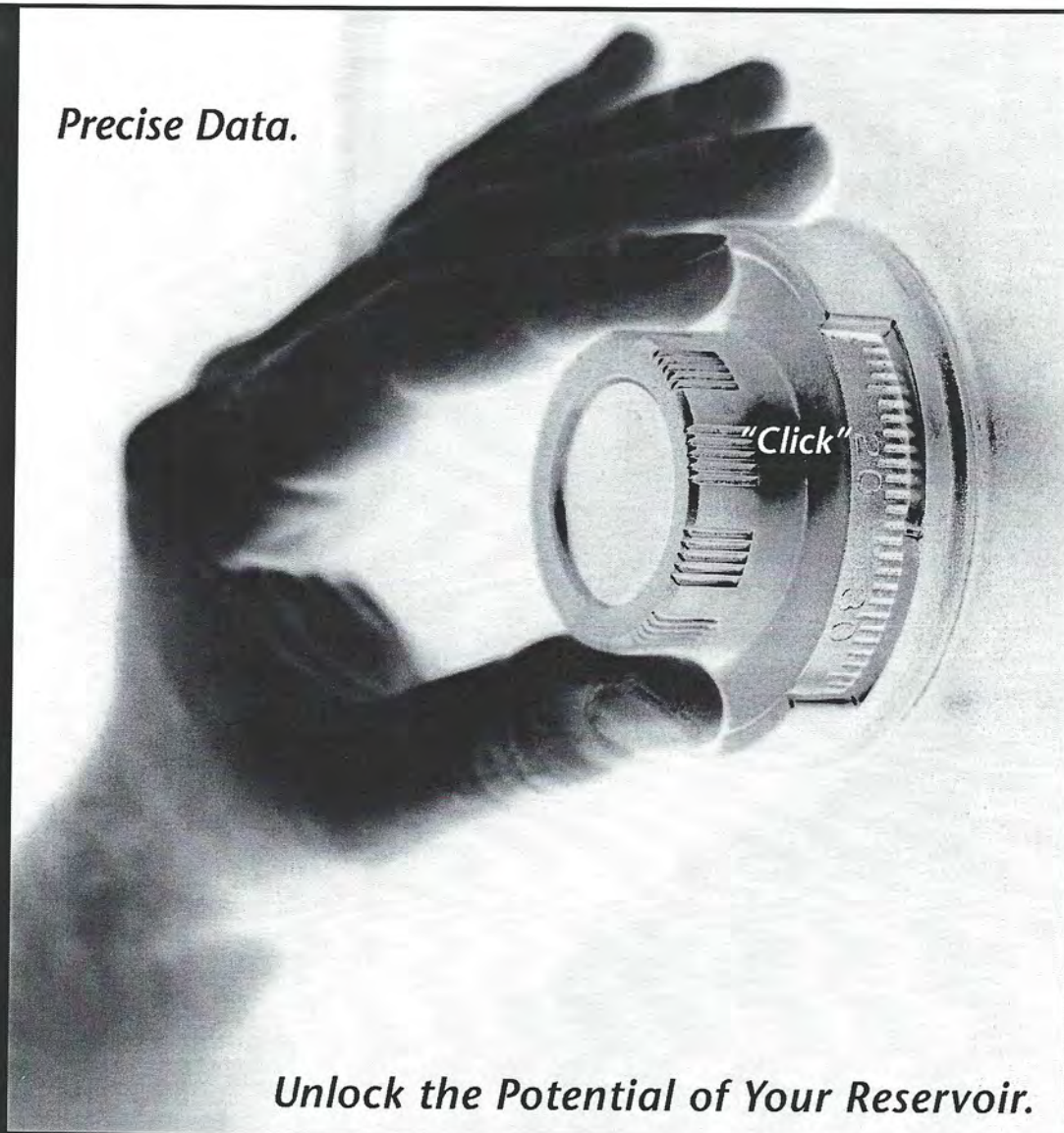
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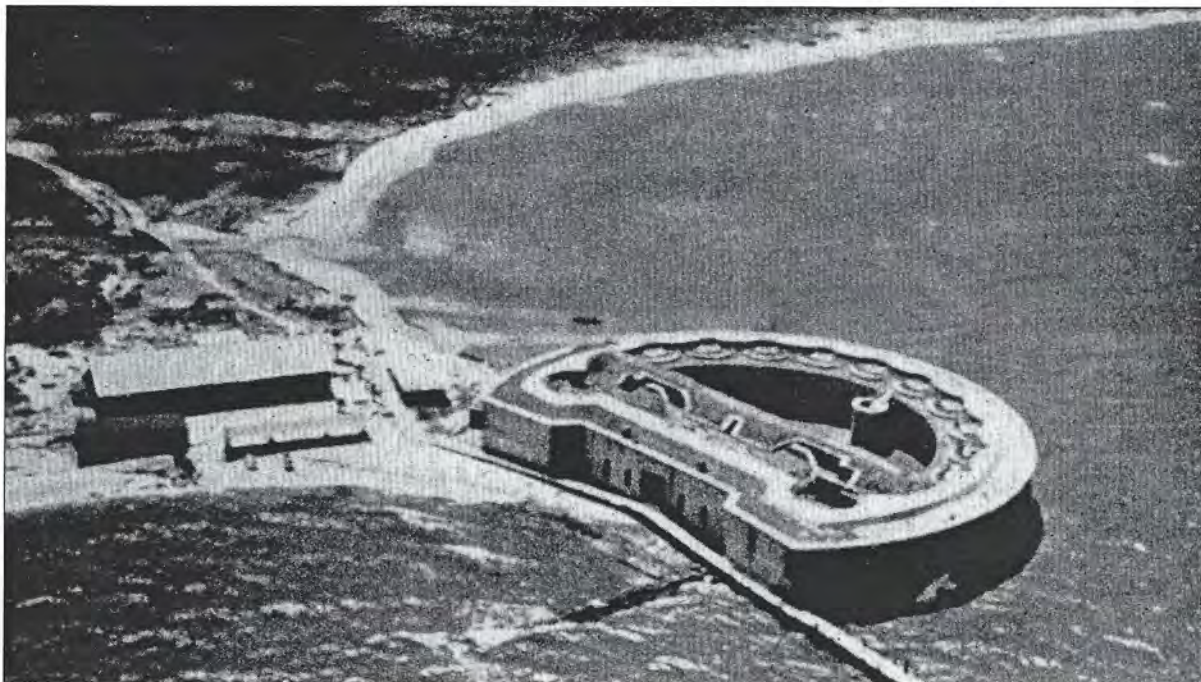
Ship Island and Fort Massachusetts

The barrier islands of our gulf coast play an important role in protecting the coastline. If not for their existence, hurricanes could cause even more devastation to our coastal communities. Ship Island has also been an important part of our nation's history. It was named in 1699 by French explorers because of the protected, deep-water anchorage it offered their ships.

The following is an excerpt from an article at gorp.away.com about the island and, especially, Fort Massachusetts:

Gulf Islands National Seashore – Fort Massachusetts

Ship Island came to the forefront of U.S. history during the War of 1812 when a British fleet assembled at Ship Island to prepare for an attack on New Orleans. The troops of Commander Andrew Jackson soundly defeated them, however. Following the War of 1812, the U.S. War Department planned for the construction of an extended system of masonry forts for coastal defense. Ship Island was considered important to the defense of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast because of its deep water harbor and location along a shipping route.



“Aerial view of Old Fort Massachusetts looking southwest across the western part of West Ship Island to the Gulf of Mexico in the distance. The Fort would have long since been cut off by Sound waters were it not for a riprap of igneous and metamorphic rocks at the Fort's left, east side.” From MS Geological Survey Bulletin 93, Heavy Minerals of Sand from Recent Beaches of the Gulf Coast of Mississippi and Associated Islands, 1962. Sand has been brought in since then, putting the fort back (usually) on dry ground.

Early in the Civil War, the Confederates seized the unfinished fort on Ship Island. Federal forces regained control of the fort in late 1861 and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers resumed construction of the fort in 1862. Federal forces used Ship Island as the staging area for their successful capture of New Orleans in the spring of 1862. A hospital, barracks, mess hall and bakery were a few of the 40 buildings constructed during the Civil War. In addition, the Army used the island as a prison camp for captured Confederate troops. It was probably during the Civil War, the fort was first called Massachusetts in honor of the Union blockade ship by the same name.

Masonry forts were designed to withstand the impact of cannonballs fired from smoothbore cannon. But, they were no match for rifled cannon, developed during the Civil War, with greater range, accuracy, and destructive power. The fort that was once a vital part of the nation's coastal defense, is now preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Construction Challenges

Construction of Fort Massachusetts stretched over a seven year period, beginning in 1859 and ending in 1866. During that time, inclement weather, the Civil War and isolation were a few of the many challenges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers faced.

From the start, construction was hampered. Storms and gales destroyed the warehouse, pier, supply vessel and construction materials. After two years of construction, the outer wall of the fort stood only six to eight feet high. The Civil War created even more problems. In early 1861, Confederate troops seized the unfinished fort and forced the engineers off the island. Building resumed later that year after Union troops regained control of the fort. Now the work party was faced with labor shortages, limited local sources for supplies and rising labor costs. The red bricks, slate, and granite had to be shipped from the New England states. The isolation of island living was difficult. Superintending Engineer Palfrey claimed that the men were working at every disadvantage on a most disagreeable island, and in an unhealthy latitude, with the roughest provision for shelter and food.

In light of these challenges, the fort's masonry work is impressive. The ceiling of each room, called a casemate, and passageway is arched or vaulted in order to support the weight of cannon mounted on top of the fort. The outer wall reaches widths of up to eight feet. The concrete foundation extends more than nine feet below sea level. Although several million bricks were used in its construction, the fort contains more concrete than brick.

Fort Massachusetts was one of the last masonry coastal fortifications to be built in the U.S. Although the fort became a victim of advancing military technology, its beauty and craftsmanship remain as symbols of a strong, yet passive coastal defense.



Aerial photo of Fort Massachusetts after Katrina, from ngs.noaa.gov (check it out).

Fort Massachusetts survives another one —

The fort has survived several notable hurricanes in this century: Betsy in 1965, Camille in 1969, Georges in 1998, and most recently Katrina in 2005. Camille's 200-mile-per-hour winds and 30-foot tides cut Ship Island in two, creating East and West Ship Islands. The island had been cut several times before and had healed itself, so perhaps it will again.

As you can see in the above aerial photo, Katrina destroyed all of the buildings around the fort, but left the fort itself apparently unharmed.

50 Years Ago ~

Why is Oil So Cheap?

From *The Oil and Gas Journal*, May 23, 1955

Gone are the \$500 car, the 5-cent cigar, the dollar watch . . . but gasoline (without taxes) costs only slightly more than it did back in 1925. This is the direct result of competition.

That's the theme of a recent magazine advertisement of the American Petroleum Institute. Nobody can quarrel with that. And yet . . . competition doesn't seem to be the whole explanation.

Competition there certainly is in the oil business, and competition has done much to make gasoline the biggest bargain on today's shopping list. But there is plenty of competition in the automobile, tobacco, and watch industries.

SO WHY IS GASOLINE SO CHEAP? Let's look at some of the other factors that keep consumer prices low:

~ Technological advances – Oil is a leader in developing and applying new processes, but most American industries are not markedly laggard in this respect.

~ Mass production – Autos and watches are usually considered the leaders in this, though it is equally true of oil.

~ Volume distribution – Oil's growth in per capita consumption and universal availability is not enough greater than other commodities to account for the difference in price increases.

~ Manpower utilization – All industries have increased their output per man-hour, and oil is not spectacularly ahead of many others.

~ Small profit margins – True of oil, but also of most competitive industries.

~ Ample raw materials – There's always been plenty of crude oil, but the nation has seldom been short of many essential commodities.

~ Cheap transportation – Here, perhaps alone of all the factors, oil has an edge. But the efficiency of pipelines and tankers can't be the whole explanation.

IS IT A COMBINATION of all these factors which has held gasoline prices so close to the 1925 level while most other prices have gone way up?

Probably so, and the industry can be thankful that it has had the advantage of all of them. And the nation can be thankful that competition in the oil business has made all the factors function for the benefit of consumers.

Or does oil have some other, special, peculiar circumstance that keeps the prices of its products from rising as fast as those of most other industries? It's an interesting philosophical question, but perhaps an idle one.

The really important thing is to maintain the aggressive competition that forces the industry to use everything that keeps gasoline the biggest bargain on the shopping list.

North American Rotary Rig Counts

The U.S. rotary rig count was up 11 rigs following a 4 rig loss in the previous week totaling 1,444 for the week of August 26, 2005 and is 16.5 percent higher than last year.

The number of rotary rigs drilling for oil was up 13 at 220. The number of rigs targeting oil is 51 rigs higher than last year's level of activity. Rigs drilling for currently oil represent 15.2% percent of total drilling activity.

Rigs directed toward natural gas were up 1 at 1,222. The number of rigs currently drilling for gas is 153 greater than last year's level of 1,069.

Year-over-year oil exploration in the US is up 30.2 percent. Gas exploration is up 14.3 percent. The weekly average of crude oil spot prices is 48.5 percent higher than last year and natural gas spot prices are up 83.0 percent.

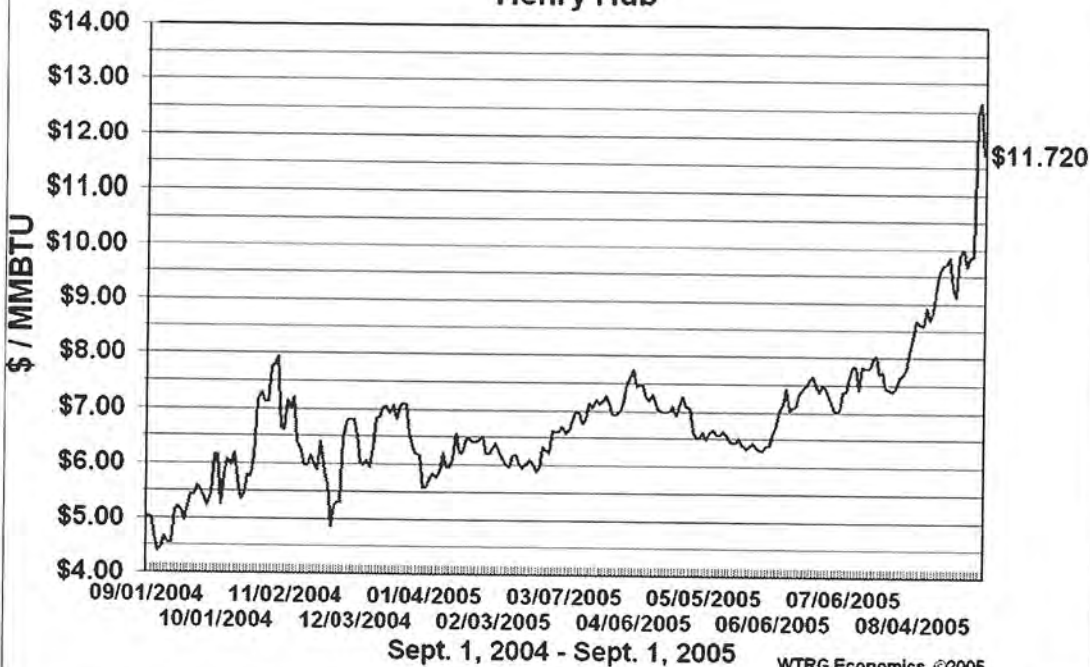
Canadian rig activity* was down 26 at 509 for the week of August 26, 2005 and is 230 rigs higher than last year's rig count. Canadian drilling falls rapidly in the spring to avoid environmental damage during the spring thaw and rainy season.

*The Canadian drilling industry experiences wide seasonal swings and even year over year comparisons can lead to incorrect conclusions.

North American Rig Count

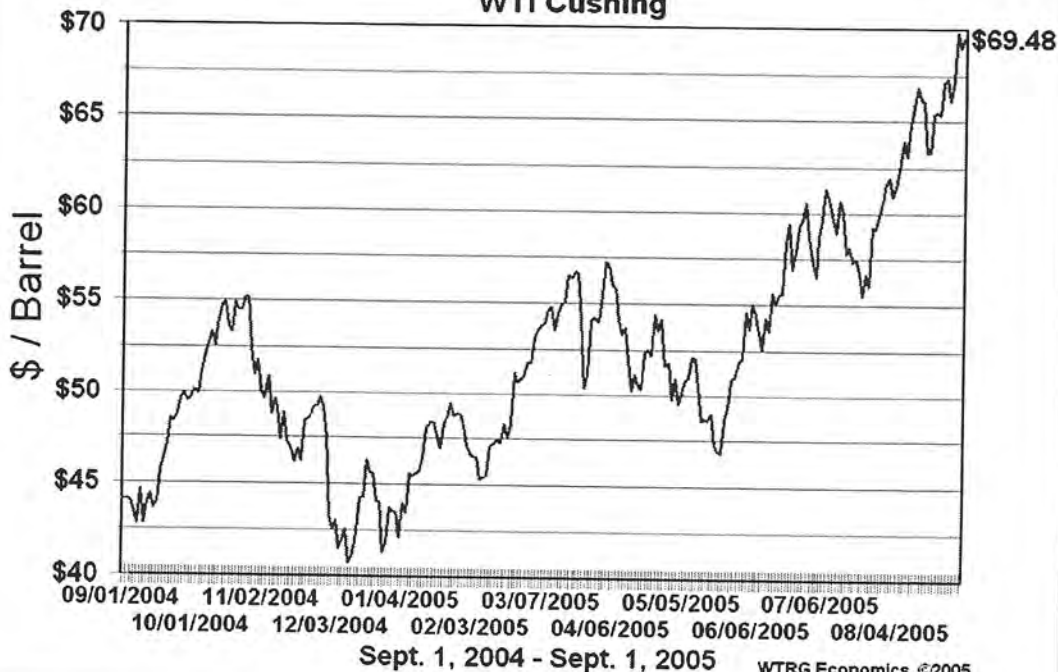
	08/26/05	08/19/05	08/27/04	Change		Percent Change	
				Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Total U.S.	1444	1433	1239	11	205	0.8%	16.5%
Offshore	100	103	93	-3	7	-2.9%	7.5%
Land	1344	1330	1146	14	198	1.1%	17.3%
Inland Waters	25	24	19	1	6	4.2%	31.6%
Oil	220	207	169	13	51	6.3%	30.2%
Percent	15.2%	14.4%	13.6%	0.8%	1.6%		
Gas	1222	1221	1069	1	153	0.1%	14.3%
Percent	84.6%	85.2%	86.3%	-0.6%	-1.7%		
Directional	360	356	321	4	39	1.1%	12.1%
Horizontal	193	190	144	3	49	1.6%	34.0%
Gulf of Mexico	96	99	88	-3	8	-3.0%	9.1%
Gulf Oil	23	19	6	4	17	21.1%	283.3%
Percent	24.0%	19.2%	6.8%	4.8%	17.1%		
Gulf Gas	73	80	82	-7	-9	-8.8%	-11.0%
Percent	76.0%	80.8%	93.2%	-4.8%	-17.1%		
Canada	509	535	279	-26	230	-4.9%	82.4%
North America	1953	1968	1518	-15	435	-0.8%	28.7%

Natural Gas Spot Henry Hub



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It's late in the morning, Boudreaux and Thibodeaux are fishing.

Thibodeaux: I'm getting hungry, let's eat.

Boudreaux: Me too, good idea.

The boys begin pulling things out of their lunch sacks. Boudreaux proudly pulls out a long red cylinder and sets it down.

Thibodeaux: Man, Boudreaux, what dat is you got?

Boudreaux: Dis is sumtin new day come out wit. Day call it a termis bottle.

Thibodeaux: A termis bottle? What it do?

Boudreaux: Man, wait'l you see. You put in sumtin hot an it keep it hot. You put in sumtin cold, an it keep it cold. An I got sumtin real special in dere for us.

Thibodeaux picks up the bottle, looks it over, shakes it, runs his hand over it, & says, Dis is nice. What day gonna tink of nex? What you got in dis termis bottle anyway?

Boudreaux: Two cup a gumbo & two popsicle.

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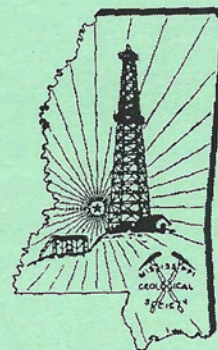
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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~
Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

If you didn't make it to the Fall Barbeque, you missed a wonderful evening. The Yacht Club is a great facility and the Staff did an exceptional job with the food and setup. On top of all that, we had a beautiful sunset to view over the reservoir.

I want to again thank our Sponsors who helped to make this event a success. Due to the overwhelming response that we had, the MGS Board has voted to increase our donation to the Boland Scholarship which will be presented to four students later this year.

On October 11th, we will have our first luncheon meeting at the Capital Club. Our own Larry Baria and Ezat Heydari will be presenting their paper on Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County, Alabama. We had the opportunity to view a Smackover core from the field at the Barbeque, and now we will learn how the reservoir was formed. Lunch begins at 11:30, so make plans to attend.

See you there,

Todd Hines



**Happy
Halloween !**



In This Issue:

Meeting Schedule

Thanks to BBQ Sponsors

Speakers' Abstract & Biographies

2004-2005 Treasurer's Report

Oil & Gas Spot Market Graphs

MGS Membership Application

MGS Advertising Notice

MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 22, 2005	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 11, 2005	'A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir—Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama	Capitol Club
November 8, 2005		Capitol Club
TBA	Christmas Party	TBA
January 10, 2006		Capitol Club
February 14, 2006		Capitol Club
March 14, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
April 11, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
TBA	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club

Boudreaux and Thibodeaux go on a fishing trip. They rent all the equipment: the reels, the rods, the wading suits, the rowboat, the car, and even a cabin in the woods. They spend a fortune.

The first day they go fishing, but they don't catch anything. The same thing happens on the second day, and also on the third day.

It goes on like this until finally, on the last day of their vacation, Boudreaux catches a fish. As they're driving home they're really depressed. Thibodeaux turns to Boudreaux and says, "Do you realize dat dis one lousy fish we caught cost us fifteen hundred dollars?"

Boudreaux says, "Wow! It's a good ting we didn't catch any more!"

John Shay - Pensacola, FL

OFFICERS MEETINGS

September 6, 2005

October 4, 2005

November 1, 2005

December 6, 2005

January 3, 2006

February 7, 2006

March 7, 2006

April 4, 2006

May 2, 2006

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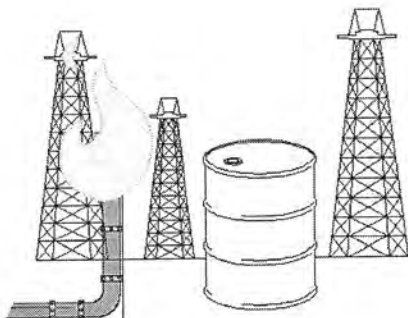
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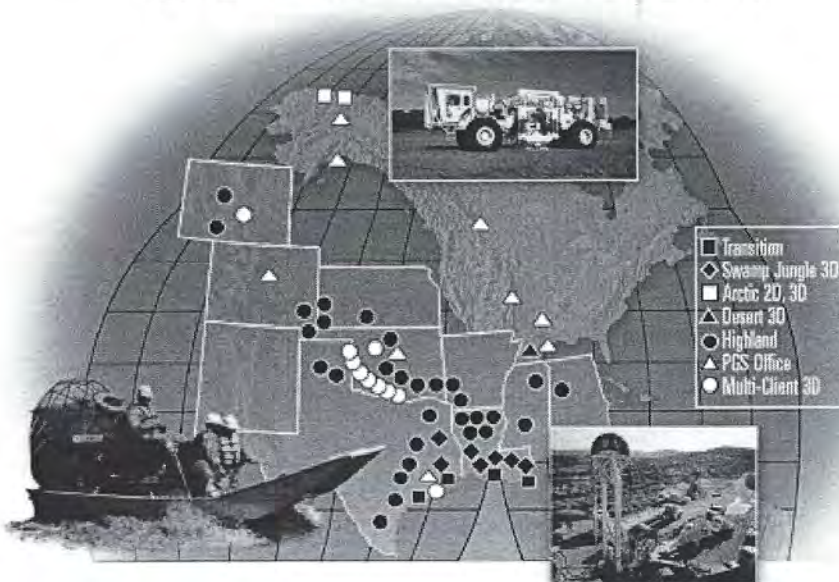
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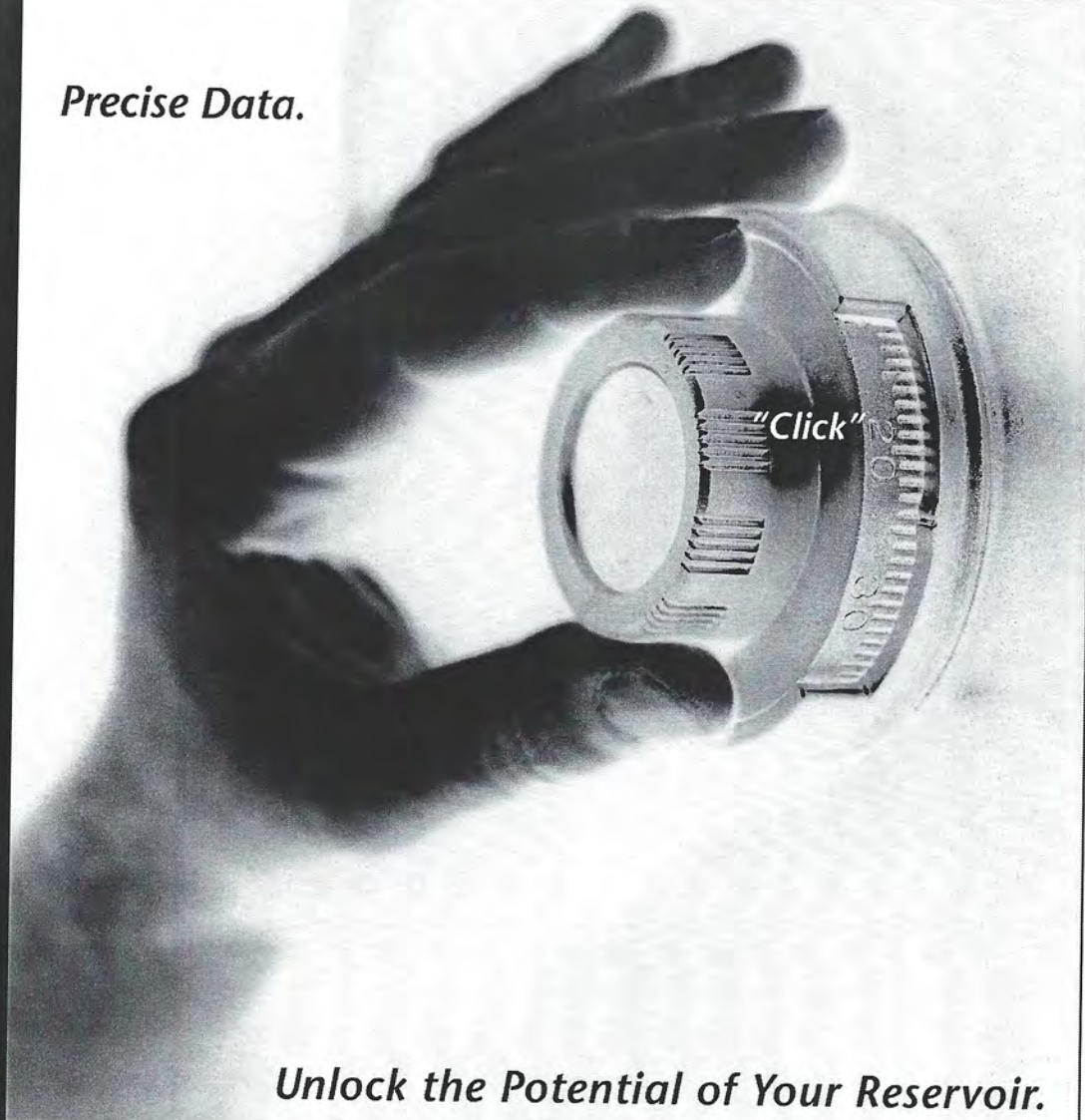
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A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir – Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama

Heydari, Ezat¹ and Baria, Lawrence²

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²Jura-Search Inc., P.O. Box 997, Jackson, Mississippi 39205; bearlear@bellsouth.net

Abstract

Little Cedar Creek Field appears to be the largest Smackover field discovered in the Northern Gulf Coast Province in the last three decades. At the time of this report (August, 2005) the field demonstrates an oil column of at least 700 feet, and extends along strike over seven miles in length. Continued development drilling is ongoing.

From nearly twenty conventional cores taken throughout the field it is apparent that two separate reservoirs exist in the Smackover: An upper ooid/peloid grainstone shoal facies, and a lower microbiolite/thrombolite bindstone reef facies. These two reservoirs are underlain, separated, and overlain by tight mid-ramp, lagoonal, and tidal flat limestones, respectively

The lower reefal reservoir is only partially dolomitized, and characterized by porosities of 6 – 25% and permeabilities in excess of 1 Darcy. The thickness of this lower reservoir is seen to vary from 2 – 50 feet. The upper ooid shoal reservoir is somewhat tighter and less permeable, is also only partially dolomitized, and varies from 0 – 30 feet in thickness. Each reservoir possesses its own distinct oil/water lever, and each reservoir pinches out in an up-dip direction.

Unlike virtually all other Smackover fields in the Eastern Gulf, Little Cedar Creek Field does not possess a Buckner anhydrite top seal immediately overlying the Smackover reservoir. Furthermore, Little Cedar Creek Field is also unique because both of its reservoirs are composed predominately of limestone, not dolomite, as is the case in most Smackover fields in the region.

The Smackover Formation is only 80 – 100 feet (24 – 30 m) thick and consists of 7 distinct lithofacies at Little Cedar Creek Field. From the base to the top, the following lithofacies are recognized: (1) a laminated peloid wackestone (mid-ramp) which overlies the red conglomerates (alluvial fan) of the Norphlet Formation with a sharp contact, (2) a bioturbated, peloid packstone (mid-ramp), (3) a microbial bindstone (inner ramp), (4) a laminated peloid wackestone – packstone (inner ramp), (5) a bioturbated peloid packstone (lagoonal), and (6) a peloid-ooid grainstone (beach). These nearly pure carbonate lithofacies are overlain by a mixed regime of lime mudstone, red and green shale, sandstone, and conglomerate (lithofacies 7) interpreted as Smackover mixed carbonate and siliciclastic tidal flat deposits. The sequence of lithofacies and their respective depositional environments indicate a shoaling upward cycle that formed by southward progradation following the rapid transgression of the Smackover sea. Virtually every lithofacies of the Smackover Formation exhibits microbial features, making the entire thickness of the formation microbial in origin at this location. Such a situation was probably caused by harsh environmental conditions imposed by the geometry of the embayment and the ramp, low energy conditions, and poor seawater circulation.

The microbial bindstone and ooid grainstone lithofacies are highly porous and permeable forming two distinct reservoirs at the Little Cedar Creek Field. The microbial bindstone reservoir consists primarily of pellets and peloids bound by microbially and abiotically precipitated cements. Framework and intergranular pores generate porosities of 6 – 25% and permeabilities as high as 1.5 Darcies. The microbial reef reservoir is overlain by the non-porous and non-permeable bioturbated peloid packstone lithofacies (5 – 20 ft) forming the seal over this reservoir. The cause of the preservation of porosity in the microbial bindstone was marine cementation preventing extensive burial compaction.

The ooid grainstone reservoir is cross-laminated and has intergranular, moldic, vuggy, and intercrystalline porosity types. The abundance of microbially coated grains and composite particles suggest a low-energy beach where microbial activities were an integral part of the environment. The ooid grainstone reservoir grades upward into nonporous and nonpermeable wackestone and packstone facies, and eventually to green and red shale and sandstone layers. The reason for the preservation of porosity in the ooid grainstone reservoir was early meteoric diagenesis, which produced moldic and intercrystalline pore spaces.

The Little Cedar Creek Field was discovered in 1994 when Hunt Oil Company drilled the #1 Cedar Creek Land & Timber 30-1. The Smackover Formation was perforated at a depth of 11870-11883 feet and tested at the rate of 108 barrels of oil per day. The original bottom hole pressure was 4300 psi, producing 46 degree API gravity oil. The Hunt well produced for several years, flowing at an average rate of 43 BOPD.

Midroc Operating Company offset the Hunt discovery in 2001 with the drilling of the #1 Cedar Creek Land & Timber 19-15. The Midroc well was completed at a rate of 250 BOPD from the same stratigraphic interval in the upper Smackover Formation. Since that time Midroc Operating Company has drilled 22 additional successful wells in an east-northeast direction from the original discovery. The average completion on the last 22 wells is 270 BOPD and roughly 250 MCFPD.

Such an important and unique discovery prompted us to conduct a comprehensive study of the Smackover at Little Cedar Creek Field to evaluate the conditions which lead to the formation of such a major dual-reservoir system. The purposes of this investigation are the following: (1) to provide a detailed description of lithofacies of the Smackover Formation in the field, with particular attention given to the reservoir and seal lithofacies characteristics, (2) to interpret the depositional environments of the Smackover Formation in order to decipher conditions which lead to deposition of this dual reservoir setting, and (3) to speculate on the future exploration strategies for similar Smackover reservoirs.

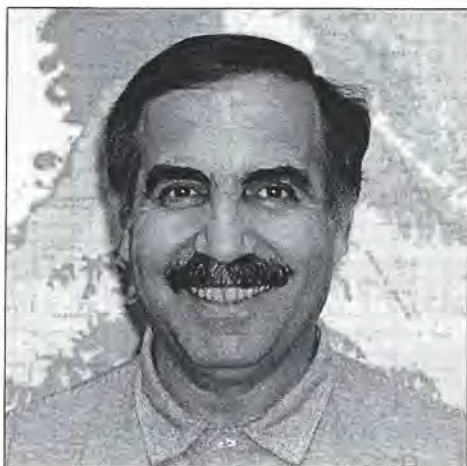
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Ezat Heydari

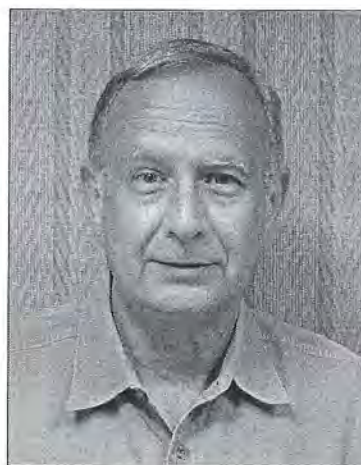
Ezat Heydari finished his undergraduate studies in geology at the University of Tehran in Iran. His graduate education in geology includes a Masters degree from the Pennsylvania State University and a Ph.D. degree from Louisiana State University. He has worked as a research scientist at LSU and at the Mississippi Office of Geology. He is currently an Assistant professor at Jackson State University. He has conducted research on sedimentology and diagenesis of Mesozoic formations of northern U.S. Gulf Coast, and Permian and Triassic strata of Iran. His interests revolve around depositional environment, diagenesis, and geochemistry of carbonate rocks to solve issues related to fluid — rock interactions and to the Earth's history.

Lawrence R. Baria

After receiving a BS and MS degree from Northeast Louisiana University, where he studied stratigraphy and sandstone petrology, Baria attended LSU to work on Ph.D. studies in stratigraphy, carbonate and sulfate diagenesis. Early in his career he worked with Getty Oil Company's E&P Research Lab, specializing in Cretaceous and Jurassic stratigraphy, worldwide. Since 1980 he has been a consulting and exploration geologist active in the Central and Eastern Gulf Coast and the Middle East, working primarily in the Smackover and other Mesozoic carbonates. His interests revolve around the relation between sedimentary petrology, the recognition of depositional environments, and the interpretation of seismic stratigraphy as applied to oil and gas exploration.



Ezat Heydari



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Ag. Museum (266.00)

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Drinks (91.74) (969.56)

Christmas Party

MPAL (1,000.00) (1,000.00)

Spring Fling

Ag. Museum (280.00)

Catfish Haven (500.00)

Drinks (112.48) (892.48)

Petraware Seminar

(2,700.00) (2,700)

Bulletin

Toner & Paper (1,167.91)

Postage (1,133.80)

Office Supplies (23.52) (2,325.23)

Boland Scholarship

Scholarship Fund (2,600.00)

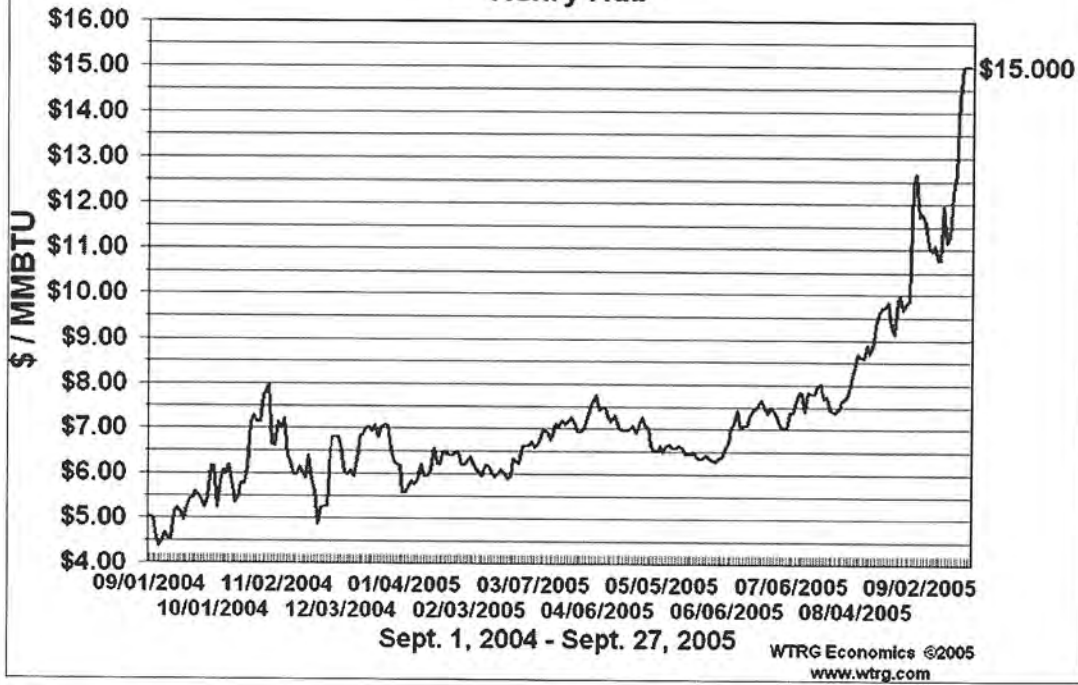
MGS Donations (400.00)

Member Donations (770.00) (3,770.00)

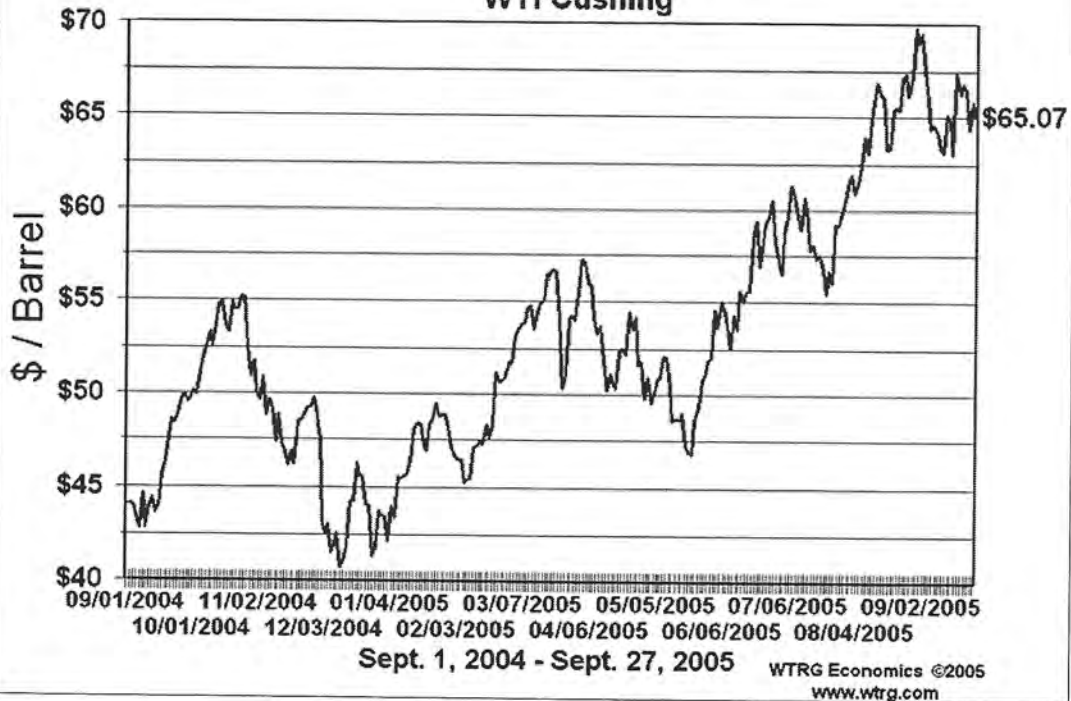
Miscellaneous			
Accounting – Tax	\$(165.00)		
Officers’ Gifts	(650.00)		
Web Site	(183.35)		
Flowers for Bill Moore	(75.97)		
MS Academy of Sc. (Best Std. Paper)	(100.00)		
P.O. Box Rental	(38.00)		
Geol. Society of Am. Donation	(250.00)		
Checking Service Charges & Checks	(97.80)		
Change for Meetings	(100.00)	\$(1,660.12)	
Total Expenses			\$(17,665.71)
Income			
Publication Sales	827.26		
Membership Dues	1,670.00		
Advertising	4,900.00		
Boland Scholarship	3,370.00		
Fall BBQ, Lunch Mtgs., Spring Fling	3,802.00		
Petraware Seminar	3,605.00		
Total Income			<u>\$18,174.26</u>
Ending Balance			\$24,439.86
Beginning Money Market Balance (5/31/04)		15,978.21	
Interest on Account		31.94	
Ending Money Market Balance (5/31/05)		16,010.15	<u>\$16,010.15</u>
GRAND TOTAL ENDING BALANCE			\$40,450.01

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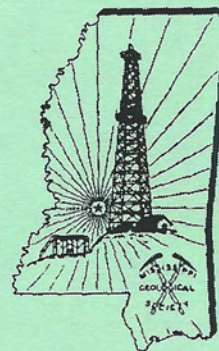
Volume 54

No. 3

November 2005

**MISSISSIPPI
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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~
Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

I want to thank Larry and Ezat for their very informative talk on Little Cedar Creek Field at the October luncheon meeting. We had one of the better turnouts that we have had in a long time. With today's oil and gas prices, we should all be motivated by this discovery to search unexplored areas along this trend.

Our next luncheon meeting will be Tuesday November 8th at the Capital Club. Cragin Knox will be our speaker and will update the Society on the capabilities of the Geographical Information System that has been developed through the Geospatial Resources Division at DEQ. This system has applications in both the environmental and petroleum industries.

Also, mark your calendar for the MAPL/MGS Christmas Party on Saturday, December 10th. Details are in this month's bulletin and invitations will be sent to all members. Anyone interested in being a sponsor for the party, please contact any MGS officer.

Thanks,

Todd Hines

Happy Thanksgiving



In This Issue:

Meeting Schedule

Christmas Party Announcement

Publication of Alan Cockrell's Book

Fossil Whale Unearthed in Madison County

50 Years Ago

Rig Count

Oil & Gas Spot Market Graphs

MGS Membership Application

MGS Advertising Notice

MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 22, 2005	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 11, 2005	'A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir—Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama'	Capitol Club
November 8, 2005	'MDEM – The MS Digital Earth Model', Cragin Knox	Capitol Club
December 10, 2005	MAPL/MGS Christmas Party	Colonial Country Club
January 10, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
February 14, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
March 14, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
April 11, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
TBA	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club

MDEM – The Mississippi Digital Earth Model

The Mississippi Legislature, in its 2003 regular session, passed a bill to establish the Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems. It also charged the MS Department of Environmental Quality to manage the development of a digital land base computer model of the state, to be called the Mississippi Digital Earth Model (MDEM). The law went into effect July 1, 2003.

The MS Digital Earth Model will be an up-to-date, highly detailed, computerized map of the State of Mississippi. It will be similar to, and coordinated with, the National Map being coordinated at the federal level by the U. S. Geological Survey. It will take years to collect all of the data required to make MDEM. When completed, MDEM will be of great benefit to both petroleum and environmental geologists.

OFFICERS MEETINGS

September 6, 2005

October 4, 2005

November 1, 2005

December 6, 2005

January 3, 2006

February 7, 2006

March 7, 2006

April 4, 2006

May 2, 2006



MAPL/MGS Christmas Party

December 10, 2005

7:30 — 12:00 P M

*Colonial Country Club
5635 Old Canton Road*

Music by SilkeSmooth, from Birmingham

Look for details in next month's Bulletin!

Notice —

Alan Cockrell's book, *Drilling Ahead: The Quest for Oil in the Deep South, 1945-2005*, will be released to the public in late November or early December 2005.

It can be ordered through any bookstore, Amazon.com, or from the publisher. The price is \$35.00.

The publisher is: The University Press of Mississippi
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211-6492

The website of the book is: <http://geocities.com/oilhistory/>

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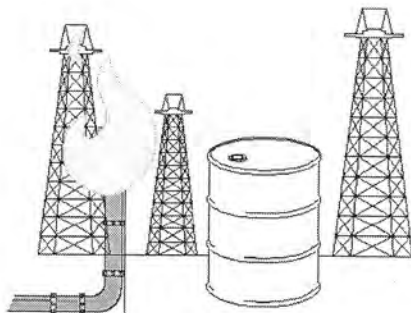
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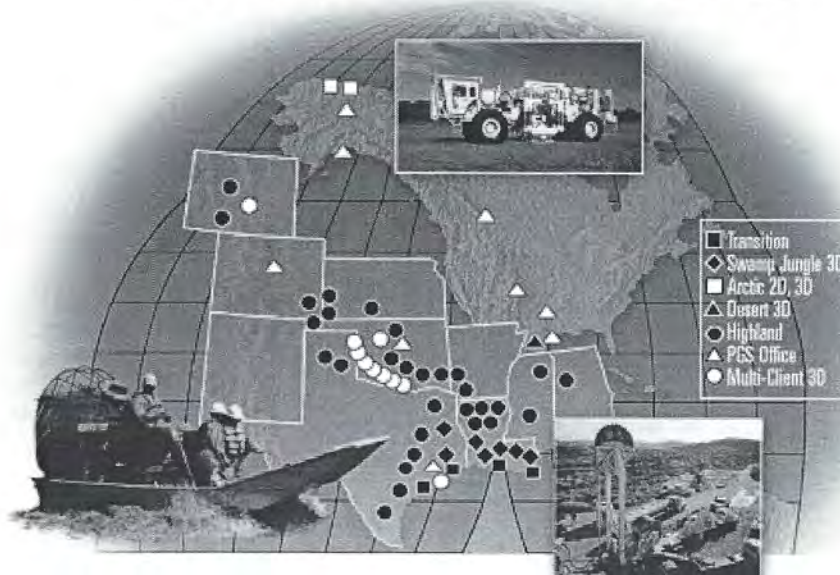
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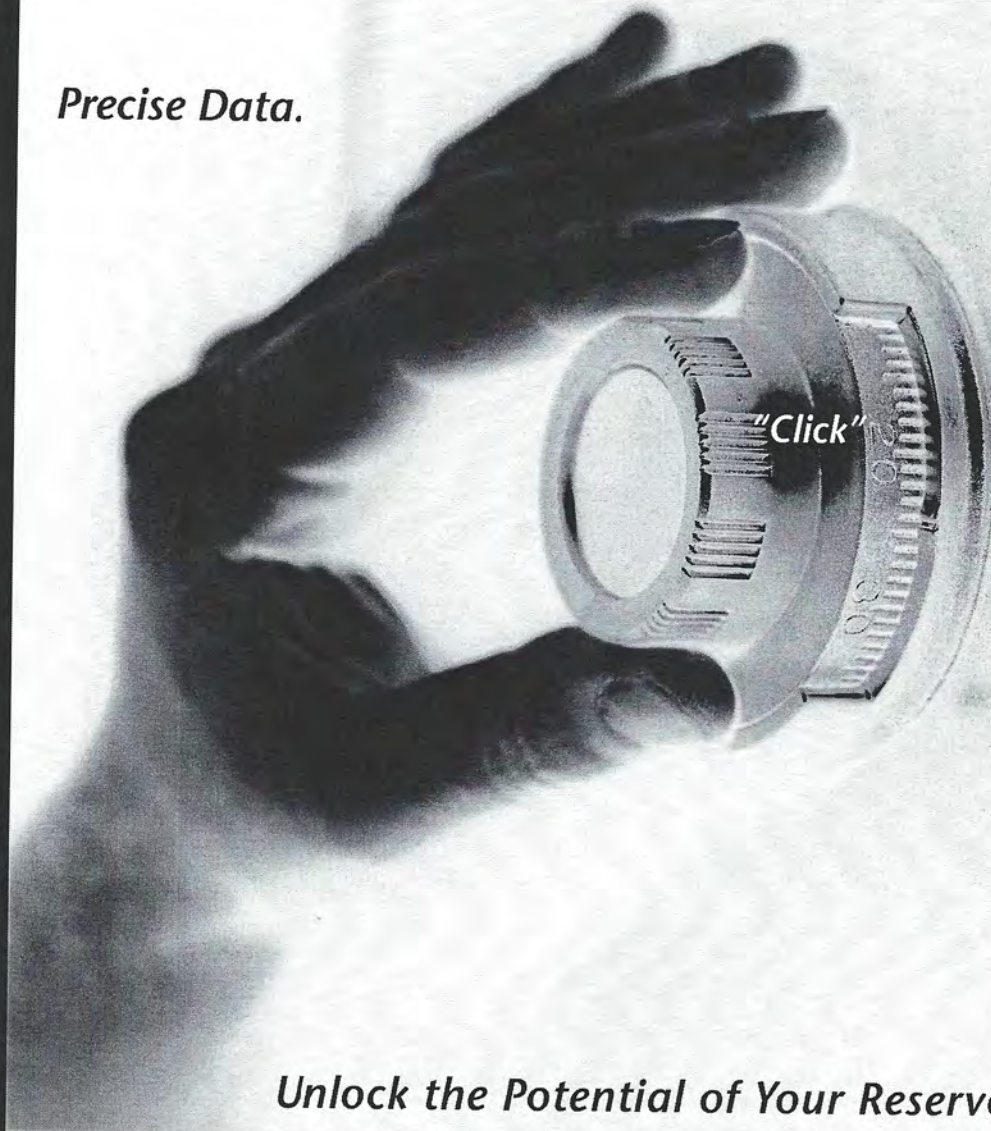
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Fossil Whale Unearthed at New Development of Harvey's Crossing Near Deerfield in Madison County, MS

By James Starnes
Geologist, MOG

Scott Weeks of the Madison County Board of Supervisors office made an unexpected discovery on July 29, 2005, while inspecting new road construction in the new addition to the Harvey's Crossing subdivision just west of the Deerfield Community in Madison County. While walking along the road, he collected a large fossil vertebra and some other bone fragments from the recently disturbed clay of the Yazoo Fm. (Late Eocene). Scott knew then that he was dealing with something much larger and older than the remains of any modern animal.

That Wednesday after receiving permission from the developer, Mark S. Jordan, a crew of scientists from the Mississippi Office of Geology, and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, as well as some volunteers, descended on the site to salvage material and to collect information. The large vertebrate material (some of which was found intact) was identified as belonging to a large Archaeocete whale called *Basilosaurus*.

After three days of digging in the hot sun, about six large vertebrae, several ribs, a partial tooth, and several other bones were recovered. The undisturbed portion of the skeleton rested on a thin iron-stained layer that represented the locally preserved sea floor surface, much like the one documented during the excavation of the Clearview basilosaur in Scott County, MS. The rest of this skeleton probably lies somewhat intact just underneath the newly constructed neighborhood street, never to be excavated.

More important than the whale bones themselves was the diverse collection of other vertebrate remains such as sharks and fish recovered during the Harvey's Crossing (Madison County, MS) excavation. Diverse, deepwater, vertebrate concentrations are generally rare in the Yazoo Formation. These rare concentrations appear to be directly associated with Archaeocete carcasses and may represent a temporary reef-like ecosystem similar to that found around modern large whale carcasses, which slowly decay on an otherwise featureless sea floor. Some of the distal ends of the bones from the mostly-complete Clearview specimen (Scott County, MS) showed signs of scavenging by sharks, as well as coral and oyster attachment and growth. As the recovered portion of this new specimen is studied, along with the host of associated fossils, we will get a clearer picture of the ecological impact made by these giant carcasses before they were finally entombed by the deep marine clay.



Three large lumbar vertebrae entombed in the Yazoo clay. These vertebrae can be greater than 15 inches in length and weigh up to 20 pounds.

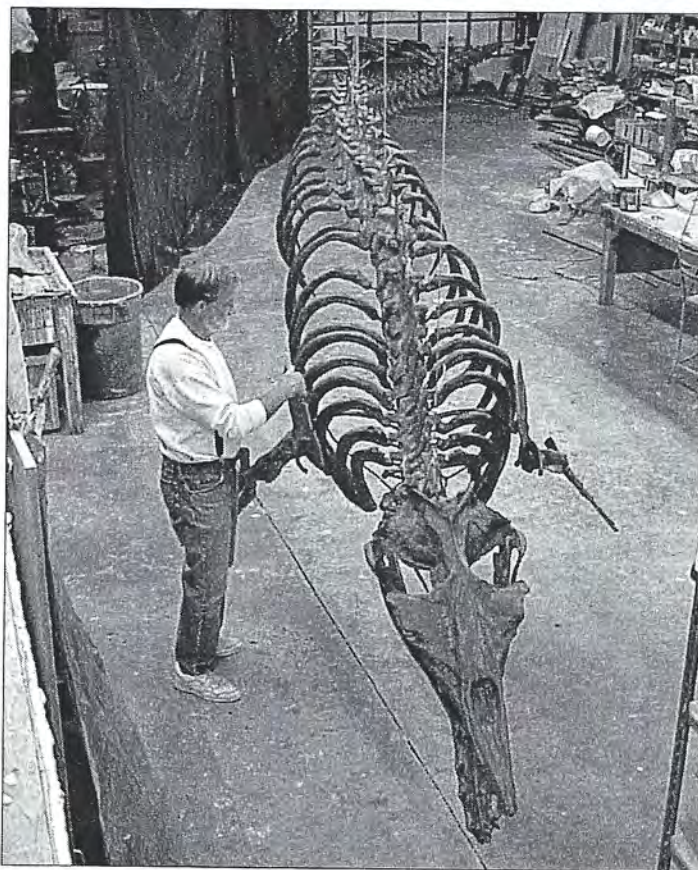


Thoracic vertebra with adjacent two complete ribs.

Ribs lying on preserved Yazoo sea floor surface denoted by fossil-rich iron-oxide parting in typically massive Yazoo Fm.



Composite reconstruction by DINOLAB, Inc. of Basilosaurus based on the Clearview specimen from the Yazoo Fm. in Scott County, MS. This reconstruction hangs in Japan's National Museum of Natural Science.



50 Years Ago ~

Problem: how to keep capacity ahead of demand

From *The Oil and Gas Journal*, June 6, 1955

One of the paradoxes of the petroleum industry is that it keeps on expanding its capacity at a rapid rate even when it has ample capacity for current and near-future demands. As one major company observed in its recent annual report:

“The oil industry as a whole continues to spend large capital sums for improvement and expansion. The question arises as to why oil companies keep on doing this at a time when there is an excess of some 15 per cent in domestic refining capacity and probably something more in crude-oil producibility.

“The main reason is that we anticipate continued growth in the use of oil. In an industry as vital and dynamic as petroleum, companies must act in response to future as well as present considerations. Money must be spent now to provide equipment and sources of supply we will need several years hence.”

Planning for a big future is a habit with the oil industry, and also a necessity. Several recent long-range forecasts foresee a steady and prodigious growth in demand for petroleum products. In the past, all such long-range forecasts have proved to be too modest.

It takes a tremendous amount of capital investment to keep increasing the industry's capacity, and the bulk of this capital comes from current earnings of the operators. Another major company has pointed out that during the past 10 years it has spent almost exactly half a million dollars a day to modernize and expand, and 82 per cent of this money came from its own operations.

The fly in the ointment is that at the moment the industry is somewhat overbuilt. With something like 2,000,000 bbl. per day of reserve producing capacity and with generally ample facilities in every other division in most localities, the industry could take care of quite an increase in demand with only nominal new construction.

The problem here is how to keep capacity just a bit—but not too far—ahead of demand and how to carry the currently unneeded fraction of capacity.

Earnings of the industry as a whole must be maintained at a level sufficient to provide the capital for future expansion. If new capacity is put into use before it is needed, it could add to the present surplus to such an extent that earnings of many operators would be insufficient for this purpose.

But holding new capacity idle is very costly, whether it be shut-in crude, refinery units, or transportation facilities.

The only solution is to continue to base budgets and operations on the necessity of carrying a certain amount of unused capacity as a more or less regular thing.

North American Rotary Rig Counts

The U.S. rotary rig count was up 6 rigs to 1,480 for the week of October 28, 2005 and is 18.3 percent higher than last year.

The number of rotary rigs drilling for oil was up 11 at 227. The number of rigs targeting oil is 48 rigs higher than last year's level of activity. Rigs drilling for oil currently represent 15.3% percent of total drilling activity.

Rigs directed toward natural gas were down 6 at 1,247. The number of rigs currently drilling for gas is 176 greater than last year's level of 1,071.

Year-over-year oil exploration in the US is up 26.8 percent. Gas exploration is up 16.4 percent. The weekly average of crude oil spot prices is 16.0 percent higher than last year and natural gas spot prices are up 85.9 percent.

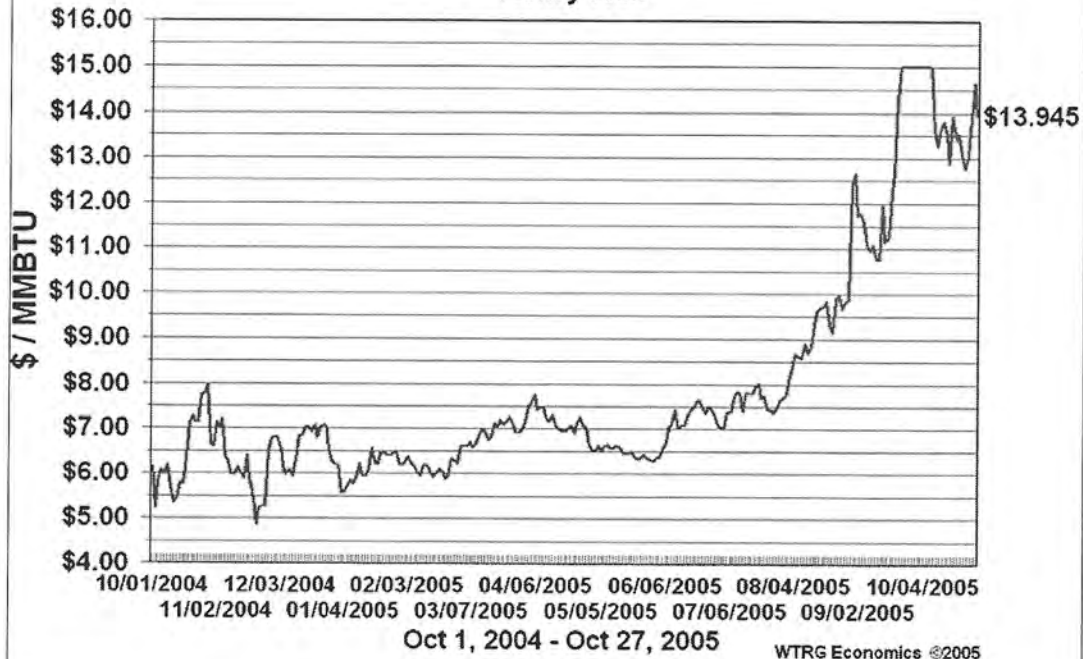
Canadian rig activity* was up 18 at 585 for the week of October 28, 2005 and is 213 rigs higher than last year's rig count. Canadian drilling falls rapidly in the spring to avoid environmental damage during the spring thaw and rainy season.

*The Canadian drilling industry experiences wide seasonal swings and even year over year comparisons can lead to incorrect conclusions.

North American Rig Count

	10/28/05	10/21/05	10/29/04	Change		Percent Change	
				Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Total U.S.	1480	1474	1251	6	229	0.4%	18.3%
Offshore	87	88	93	-1	-6	-1.1%	-6.5%
Land	1393	1386	1158	7	235	0.5%	20.3%
Inland Waters	21	21	21	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Oil	227	216	179	11	48	5.1%	26.8%
Percent	15.3%	14.7%	14.3%	0.7%	1.0%		
Gas	1247	1253	1071	-6	176	-0.5%	16.4%
Percent	84.3%	85.0%	85.6%	-0.8%	-1.4%		
Directional	346	350	331	-4	15	-1.1%	4.5%
Horizontal	202	205	133	-3	69	-1.5%	51.9%
Gulf of Mexico	82	84	88	-2	-6	-2.4%	-6.8%
Gulf Oil	29	25	1	4	28	16.0%	2800.0%
Percent	35.4%	29.8%	1.1%	5.6%	34.2%		
Gulf Gas	53	59	87	-6	-34	-10.2%	-39.1%
Percent	64.6%	70.2%	98.9%	-5.6%	-34.2%		
Canada	585	567	372	18	213	3.2%	57.3%
North America	2065	2041	1623	24	442	1.2%	27.2%

Natural Gas Spot Henry Hub

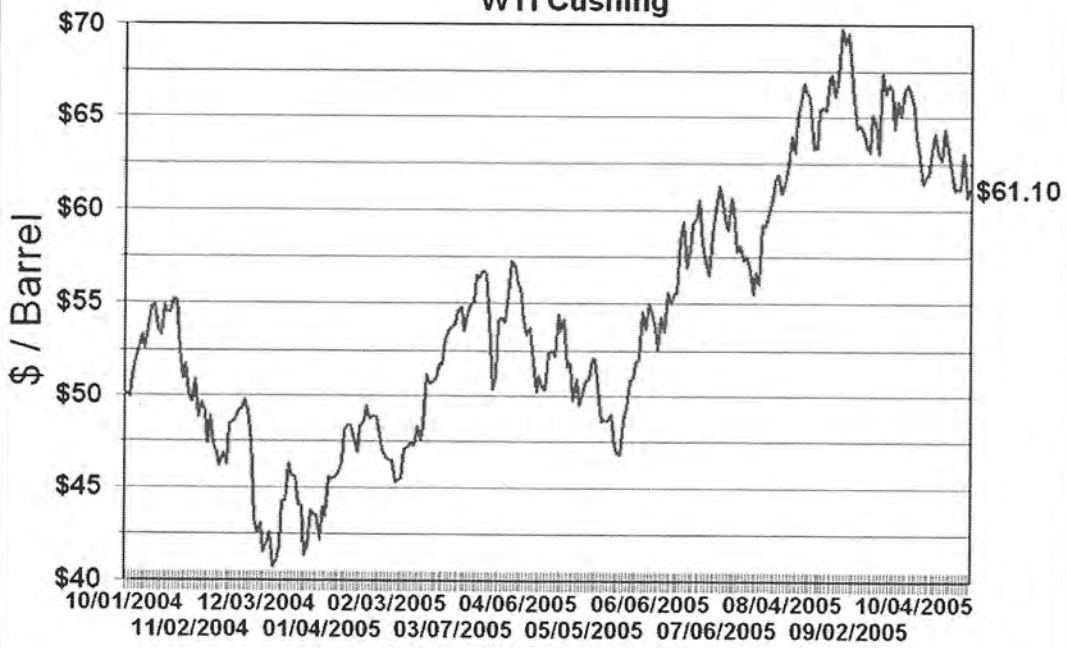


10/01/2004 12/03/2004 02/03/2005 04/06/2005 06/06/2005 08/04/2005 10/04/2005
11/02/2004 01/04/2005 03/07/2005 05/05/2005 07/06/2005 09/02/2005

Oct 1, 2004 - Oct 27, 2005

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Crude Oil Spot WTI Cushing



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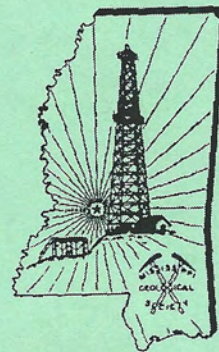
Volume 54

No. 4

December 2005

**MISSISSIPPI
GEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY
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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~
Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

I hope everyone had a happy Thanksgiving and is looking forward to a festive Christmas season. After the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina, we have so much to be thankful for. This will not be as joyous a holiday for the thousands along the Gulf Coast; so count your blessings.

As always, we will not have a luncheon meeting this month; but don't forget the Christmas Party at Colonial Country Club on December 10th. Everyone should have received an invitation with a ticket order form. If by chance you did not, please contact an officer and we will make arrangements to get you one.

In closing, I want to mention the loss of Clem Dazet on November 3rd, due to complications from open heart surgery. Keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Merry Christmas,
Todd Hines

In This Issue:

Meeting Schedule
Publication of Alan Cockrell's Book
Christmas Party Announcement
GCAGS Call For Papers
50 Years Ago
Bubba Claus
Rig Count
Oil & Gas Spot Market Graphs
MGS Membership Application
MGS Advertising Notice

BOLAND FUND DONATIONS

The Society would like to remind all members that space is provided on the dues statement for a donation to the Boland Scholarship Fund. Please consider donating an amount of your choice when returning your dues payment. It is tax deductible. We struggle to maintain an adequate account value to provide enough interest and dividends for a worthwhile award to the four scholarship students that the Society supports each year. Last year, we raised \$770 from a relatively few individuals. With more participation, we could do much better this year. The Society and the students will appreciate your consideration.

Dave Cate

*Merry
Christmas*



MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 22, 2005	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 11, 2005	'A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir—Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama'	Capitol Club
November 8, 2005	'MDEM – The MS Digital Earth Model', Cragin Knox	Capitol Club
December 10, 2005	MAPL/MGS Christmas Party	Colonial Country Club
January 10, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
February 14, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
March 14, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
April 11, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
TBA	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club

Notice —

Alan Cockrell's book, *Drilling Ahead: The Quest for Oil in the Deep South, 1945-2005*, will be released to the public in late November or early December 2005.

It can be ordered through any bookstore, Amazon.com, or from the publisher. The price is \$35.00.

The publisher is: The University Press of Mississippi
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211-6492

The website of the book is:

<http://geocities.com/oilhistory/>

OFFICERS MEETINGS

September 6, 2005

October 4, 2005

November 1, 2005

December 6, 2005

January 3, 2006

February 7, 2006

March 7, 2006

April 4, 2006

May 2, 2006



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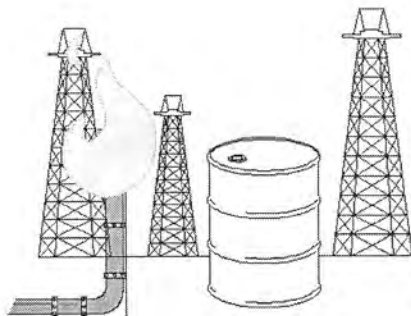
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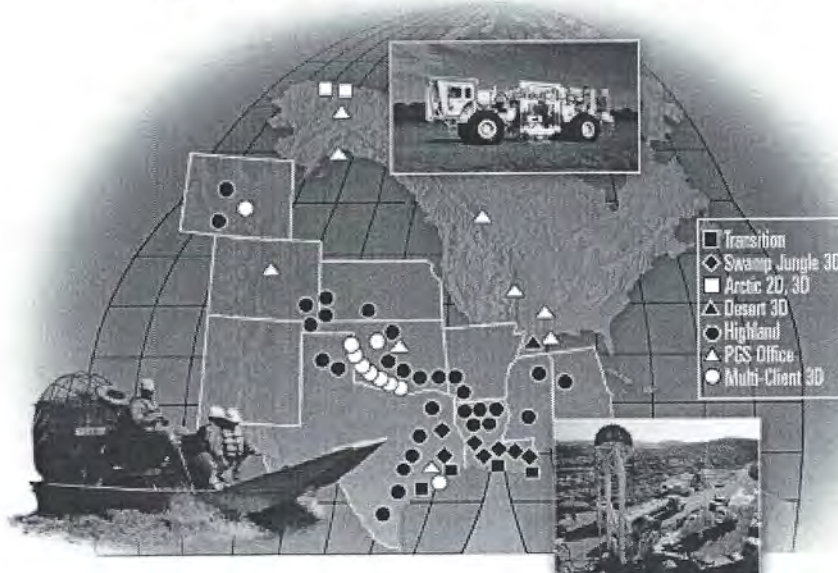
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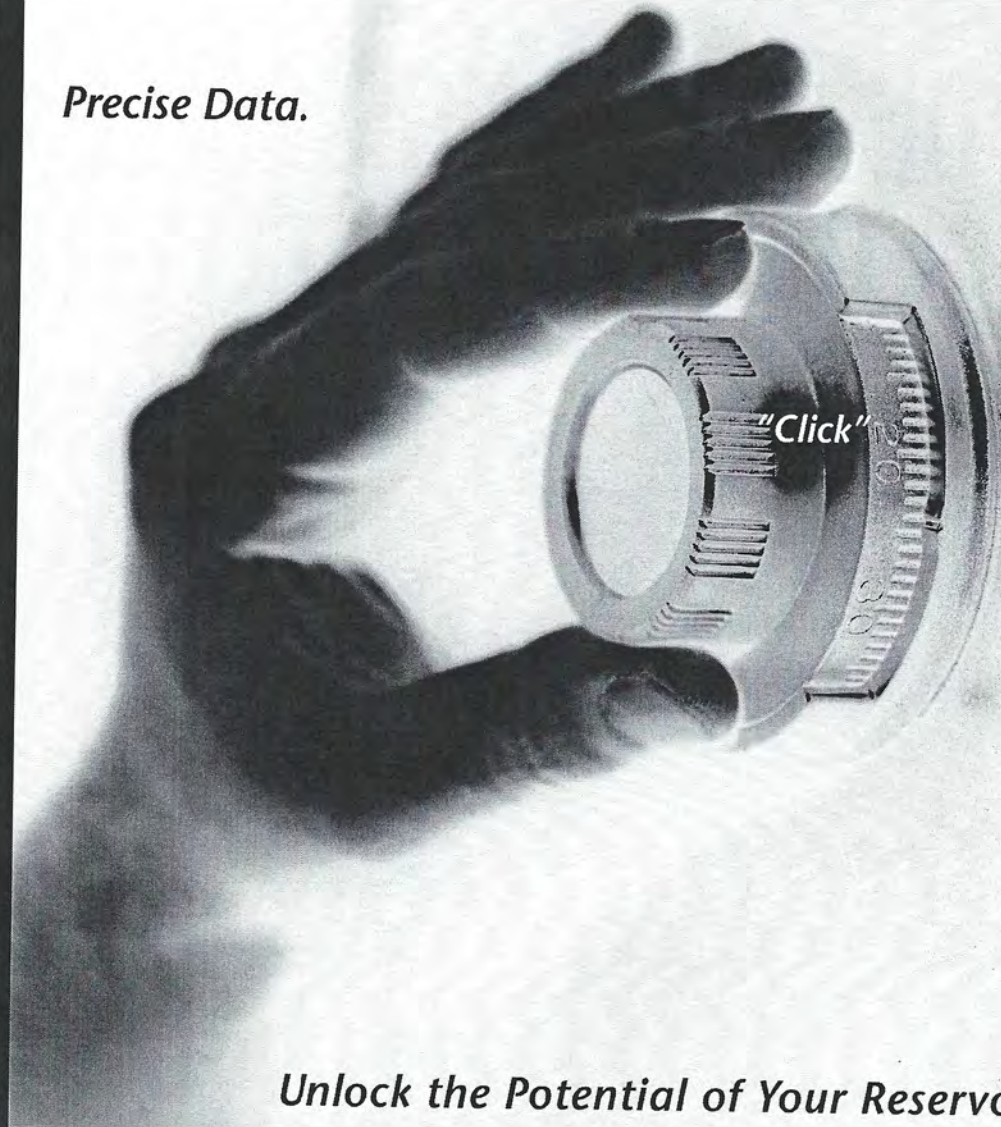
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How and When to Submit:

Abstracts of proposed presentations must be submitted in standard format (250 words or less; no figures or references) by **Jan. 16, 2006**.

There are two ways to submit abstracts:

- 1) Connect to the GCAGS 2006 website, <http://www.gcags2006.com> and follow the instructions.
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50 Years Ago~

Shale-Oil Future Bright

From *The Oil and Gas Journal*, June 27, 1955

Union Oil building first commercial plant in Colorado; says products can compete with crude on West Coast

DENVER—Union Oil Co. has started work on its first commercial-scale oil-shale retort on Parachute Creek, Colorado. Company officials believe that products refined from shale oil can be sold on the West Coast competitively at present prices of crude oil.

This was announced by A. C. Rubel, vice president of Union, in an address to the Interstate Oil Compact Commission. He said that in excess of 100 billion barrels of easily recoverable liquid fuels from oil shale may be competing on the market with crude oil within a few years.

The Parachute Creek plant will have a capacity of 1,000 tons of shale per day, which Union believes is the best commercial size. It will be the same design as the company's successful 50-ton pilot plant. This will permit further studies of mining and retorting methods and costs, and will provide quantities of crude shale oil for refining experiments.

What are costs? . . . Rubel did not indicate how fast Union may go with development plans, but he said:

“An installation including mines, retorts, coking and hydrogenation facilities, byproduct recovery, and utilities to produce 40,000 bbl. per day of crude shale oil would represent an investment at present labor and material costs of approximately \$75,000,000.

“A pipeline of 50,000 bbl. Per day capacity from Rifle, Colo., to Los Angeles, a distance of approximately 815 miles, designed to transport the semi-refined, hydrogenated material, is estimated to cost \$56,000,000.

“At these figures, the material could be produced and delivered to the Los Angeles market at a cost competitive with current crude prices, allowing reasonable rates of interest, depreciation, and profit.”

Processing . . . Under the method proposed by Union, the crude shale oil from the retorts would be partially processed near the mine site before being piped to a refinery.

The crude shale oil would first be coked. Then the coke distillate would be hydrogenated to remove sulfur and nitrogen and to improve the quality of the product. The resulting material would be a high-grade gas oil which could be shipped to the West Coast for conventional refining.

At the mine site, the products to be disposed of would be excess fuel gas, sulfur, ammonia, and large quantities of coke suitable for metallurgical purposes.

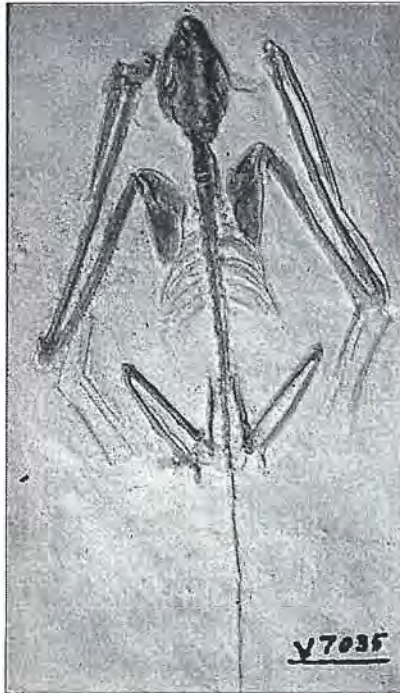
Vast reserves . . . The Parachute Creek retort will be supplied by a mine in the Mahogany Ledge deposit of shale near Rifle in the Green River basin of Colorado. Rubel said the Mahogany Ledge ranges up to 100 ft. in thickness and averages 30 gal. Per ton of recoverable shale oil. This represents a commercially recoverable reserve of 100 billion barrels.

If crude shale oil is produced at the rate of 1,000,000 bbl. per day, he said, the Mahogany Ledge could supply 12.5 per cent of present domestic consumption of petroleum for 275 years.

Shale oil also can compete on a cost basis with solid coal, liquid fuels from coal, natural gas, or nuclear energy.

“It can compete with crude oil,” he said, “because in the principal available markets, namely the Pacific Coast, the outlook is for the immediate necessity of supplementing current crude supplies from outside sources. Present estimates of the cost of production of liquid fuels from oil shale delivered to the market area indicate these products will be competitive with products from either imports or domestic production at current prices.

“I believe it can be stated, from the best information available, that the cost of producing liquid fuels from oil shale will increase at a much lesser rate than that from natural crudes, at least within the United States.”



Fossils from the Green River Formation: Bat (L) and Bird (R).

Merry Christmas, Y'all,



I regret to inform you that, effective immediately, I will no longer be able to serve the Southern United States area on Christmas Eve. Due to the overwhelming current population of the earth, my contract was renegotiated by North American Fairies and Elves Local 209. I now serve only certain areas of Ohio and West Virginia. I also get longer breaks for milk and cookies.

However, I'm certain that your children will be in good hands with my local replacement, my third cousin from the South Pole, Bubba Claus. He shares my goal of delivering toys to all the good boys and girls, but there are a few differences between us, such as:

Instead of milk and cookies, Bubba Claus prefers that children leave an RC Cola and pork rinds on the fireplace; and Bubba doesn't smoke a pipe. He does dip a little snuff, though, so please have an empty coke can handy.

Bubba Claus' sleigh is pulled by floppy-eared, flyin' coon dogs instead of reindeer. You won't hear, "On Comet, on Cupid, on Donner and Blitzen" when Bubba arrives. Instead, you'll hear, "On Earnhardt, on Wallace, on Martin and Labonte. On Rudd, on Jarrett, on Elliot and Petty."

"Ho, ho, ho!" has been replaced by "Yeehaw!" And you also are likely to hear Bubba's elves respond, "I heard that!"

The usual Christmas movie classics such as "Miracle on 34th Street" and "It's a Wonderful Life" will not be shown in your area. Instead, you'll see "Ernest Saves Christmas" and "Smokey and the Bandit IV", featuring Burt Reynolds as Bubba Claus and dozens of state patrol cars crashing into each other.

Bubba Claus doesn't wear a belt. If I were you, I'd turn the other way when he bends over to put presents under the tree.

Lovely Christmas songs have been sung about me, including Elvis' "Here Come Santa Clause" and Bing Crosby's "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." Until this year, songs about Bubba Claus have been played only on AM radio stations in Mississippi. They include such classics as Mark Chesnutt's "Bubba Claus Shot the Jukebox," Cledus T. Judd's "All I want for Christmas is Shania Twain," David Allan Coe's "Willie, Waylon Bubba Claus and Me," and Hank Williams Jr.'s "If You Don't Like Bubba Claus, You Can Kiss My Icicle."

Sincerely Yours,

Santa

North American Rotary Rig Counts

The U.S. rotary rig count was up 13 rigs to 1,491 for the week of November 23, 2005 and is 19.2 percent higher than last year.

The number of rotary rigs drilling for oil was up 10 at 275. The number of rigs targeting oil is 98 rigs higher than last year's level of activity. Rigs drilling currently for oil represent 18.4% percent of total drilling activity.

Rigs directed toward natural gas were up 3 at 1,212. The number of rigs currently drilling for gas is 140 greater than last year's level of 1,072.

Year-over-year oil exploration in the US is up 55.4 percent. Gas exploration is up 13.1 percent. The weekly average of crude oil spot prices is 18.2 percent higher than last year and natural gas spot prices are up 106.4 percent.

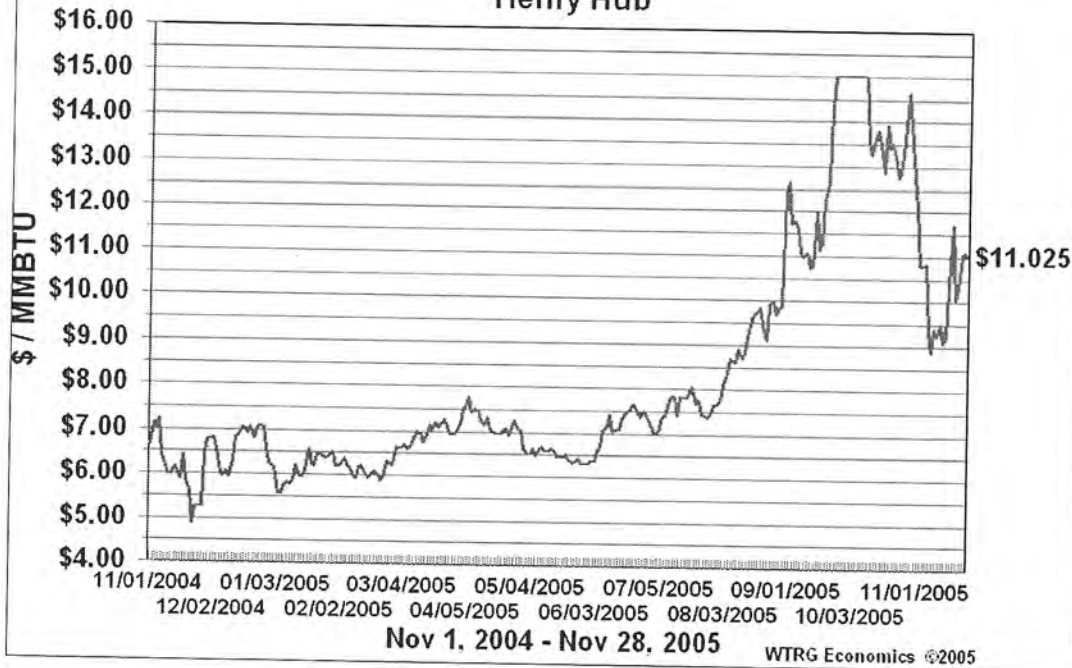
Canadian rig activity* was up 12 at 631 for the week of November 23, 2005 and is 169 rigs higher than last year's rig count. Canadian drilling falls rapidly in the spring to avoid environmental damage during the spring thaw and rainy season.

*The Canadian drilling industry experiences wide seasonal swings and even year over year comparisons can lead to incorrect conclusions.

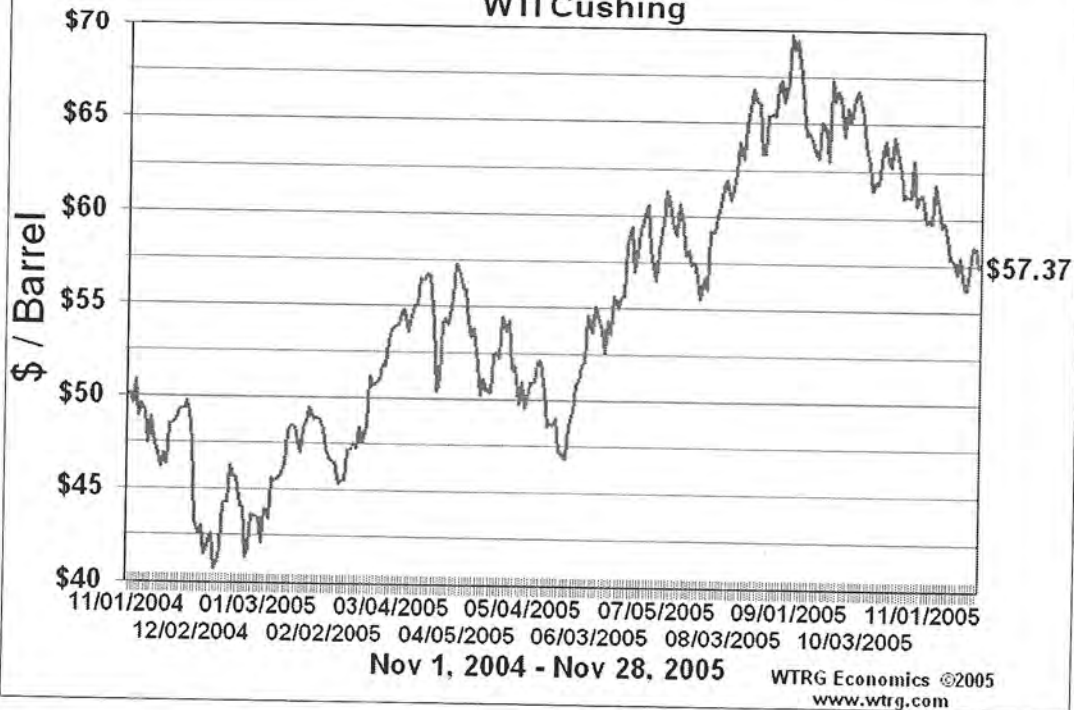
North American Rig Count

	11/25/05	11/18/05	11/26/04	Change		Percent Change	
				Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Total U.S.	1491	1478	1251	13	240	0.9%	19.2%
Offshore	81	83	102	-2	-21	-2.4%	-20.6%
Land	1410	1395	1149	15	261	1.1%	22.7%
Inland Waters	22	21	19	1	3	4.8%	15.8%
Oil	275	265	177	10	98	3.8%	55.4%
Percent	18.4%	17.9%	14.1%	0.5%	4.3%		
Gas	1212	1209	1072	3	140	0.2%	13.1%
Percent	81.3%	81.8%	85.7%	-0.5%	-4.4%		
Directional	361	348	340	13	21	3.7%	6.2%
Horizontal	216	211	123	5	93	2.4%	75.6%
Gulf of Mexico	77	79	96	-2	-19	-2.5%	-19.8%
Gulf Oil	34	35	2	-1	32	-2.9%	1600.0%
Percent	44.2%	44.3%	2.1%	-0.1%	42.1%		
Gulf Gas	43	44	94	-1	-51	-2.3%	-54.3%
Percent	55.8%	55.7%	97.9%	0.1%	-42.1%		
Canada	631	619	462	12	169	1.9%	36.6%
North America	2122	2097	1713	25	409	1.2%	23.9%

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Crude Oil Spot WTI Cushing



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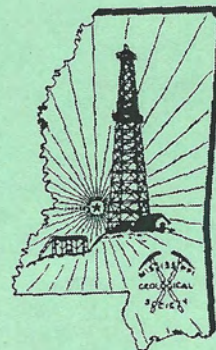
Volume 54

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January 2006

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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~
Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and is looking forward to a healthy and profitable New Year. In a sense, the great thing about another calendar year is the feeling that you are getting to start over. Hopefully, that relates to fresh new ideas and prospects.

Our first luncheon meeting on January 10th will be one you do not want to miss. Kent Bowker will be giving his talk on the Barnett Shale. Kent was on the staff at Mitchell Energy during the time when they were developing the technology to produce the Barnett. Kent is now a consultant involved in various US shale plays. With the increased activity in the Black Warrior Basin, this should be valuable information for development of the Neal/Floyd Shale play.

If you have not bought a copy of Alan Cockrell's book, "Drilling Ahead: The Quest for Oil in the Deep South, 1945-2005"; make a point to do so. It is a great read and provides a detailed historical sketch of the larger discoveries in our area which many of our local geologists played a part in.

In February, the Society will make it's presentation of the Boland Scholarship to three noteworthy geology students. Our industry is starving for young geologists, so donations to the Boland Fund would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
Todd Hines

Happy
New
Year !!!



BOLAND FUND DONATIONS

The Society would like to remind all members that space is provided on the dues statement for a donation to the Boland Scholarship Fund. Please consider donating an amount of your choice when returning your dues payment. It is tax deductible. We struggle to maintain an adequate account value to provide enough interest and dividends for a worthwhile award to the four scholarship students that the Society supports each year. Last year, we raised \$770 from a relatively few individuals. With more participation, we could do much better this year. The Society and the students will appreciate your consideration.

In This Issue:

Meeting Schedule
A Little Perspective Can Go A Long Way
Speaker's Bio and Abstract
Global Stratigraphy & the Geology of Mississippi
Rig Count
Oil & Gas Spot Market Graphs
MGS Membership Application
MGS Advertising Notice

MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 22, 2005	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 11, 2005	'A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir—Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama'	Capitol Club
November 8, 2005	'MDEM – The MS Digital Earth Model', Cragin Knox	Capitol Club
December 10, 2005	MAPL/MGS Christmas Party	Colonial Country Club
January 10, 2006	'The Barnett Shale Play of North Texas: Myths Exposed, Truths Revealed'	Capitol Club
February 14, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
March 14, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
April 11, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
TBA	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club

A Little Perspective Can Go A Long Way

Boudreaux was walking out of a bar in Breaux Bridge when he sees a bum panhandling on the corner. The bum, Thibodeaux, says, "Mister, can you give me a dollar?" Boudreaux thinks a minute, then asks the bum, "If I give you a dollar, are you going to use it to buy liquor?" "No," says Thibodeaux.

"If I give you a dollar, are you going to use it to gamble?" asks Boudreaux.

Again Thibodeaux says, "No."

So Boudreaux says to him, "Would you mind coming home with me so I can show my wife what happens to someone who doesn't drink or gamble?"

OFFICERS MEETINGS

September 6, 2005

October 4, 2005

November 1, 2005

December 6, 2005

January 3, 2006

February 7, 2006

March 7, 2006

April 4, 2006

May 2, 2006

The Barnett Shale Play of North Texas: Myths Exposed, Truths Revealed

Kent A. Bowker, Bowker Petroleum, LLC

Many Barnett workers have an incorrect understanding of the Barnett reservoir of the Fort Worth Basin. No one has a complete understanding of exactly how this nonconventional reservoir actually works, but we have enough understanding to know that many of the ideas held by some Barnett workers are incorrect. For example, the Barnett is naturally fractured, but only a tiny fraction of these fractures are open. The Barnett is not a fractured-shale play; it's a shale that can be fractured play (Daniel Miller). In fact, areas that have the most natural fractures (again, the vast majority of these fractures are healed), i.e., areas near faulting, have the lowest production. The huge concentration of gas in place is what makes the Barnett successful, along with the rock's mechanical properties (that it is relatively brittle). Structural folds (including anticlines) are, on average, detrimental to Barnett production. The thermal history of the basin is another key to the success of the play. The gas is entirely thermogenic. Limestone beds within the Barnett are the result of submarine debris flows (turbidities), not by shoaling. Carbonate nodules seen in core and on image logs are the result of soft-sediment processes; they are not concretions. The core area of Newark East field is not a sweetspot, it is just the first area that Mitchell Energy started drilling (because that is where Mitchell had existing acreage and infrastructure). One man is solely responsible for the success of the Barnett play: George P. Mitchell.

Biographical Sketch

Kent A. Bowker is currently manager of Bowker Petroleum, LLC., a production company with activity centered in the Barnett Shale play of North Texas and conventional oil plays in Illinois. Kent also consults for several operators in various shale plays.

Kent began his career with Gulf Oil in 1980, then moved on to Chevron with the merger. His last assignment with Chevron was in the Nonconventional Gas Business Team where he learned about various coal, shale, and tight-sandstone reservoirs, including the Barnett Shale. He began at Mitchell Energy in early 1998 where he assumed the geological duties on the Barnett Shale team. It was during the two-year period beginning in 1998 that two major events took place in the play: the perfecting of water fracs in the Barnett, and development of a true understanding of the gas in place (which is nearly four-times higher than thought previously). With the sale of Mitchell Energy to Devon, Kent moved on to Star of Texas Energy where he oversaw the drilling of over forty Barnett wells. He formed his own company in late 2004.

Kent is a licensed geologist in Texas and Wyoming, and is a member of AAPG (where is currently serving his second consecutive term as an associate editor of the *Bulletin*), HGS, RMAG and SPE. He has published numerous papers covering the history of geology, enhanced-recovery projects, and the geology of several conventional and nonconventional reservoirs.

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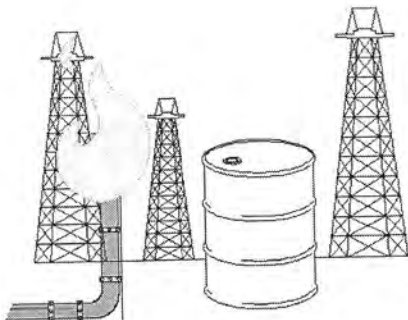
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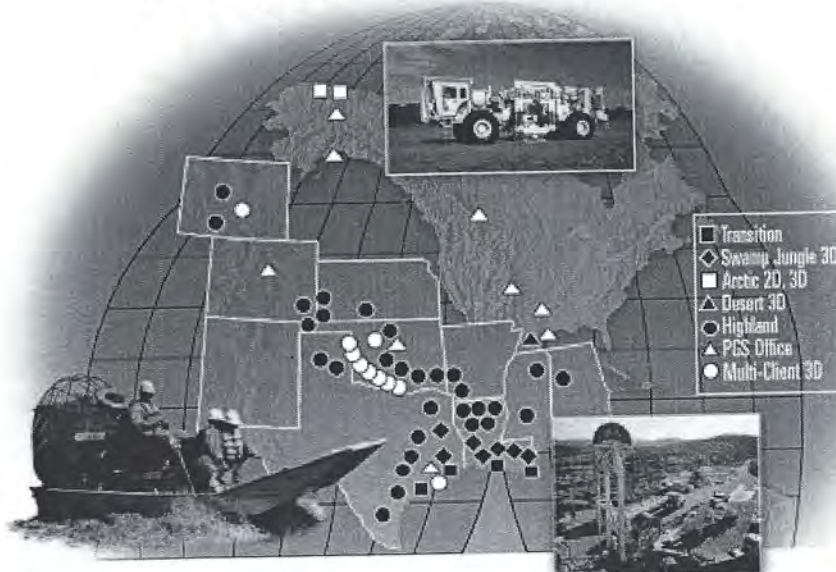
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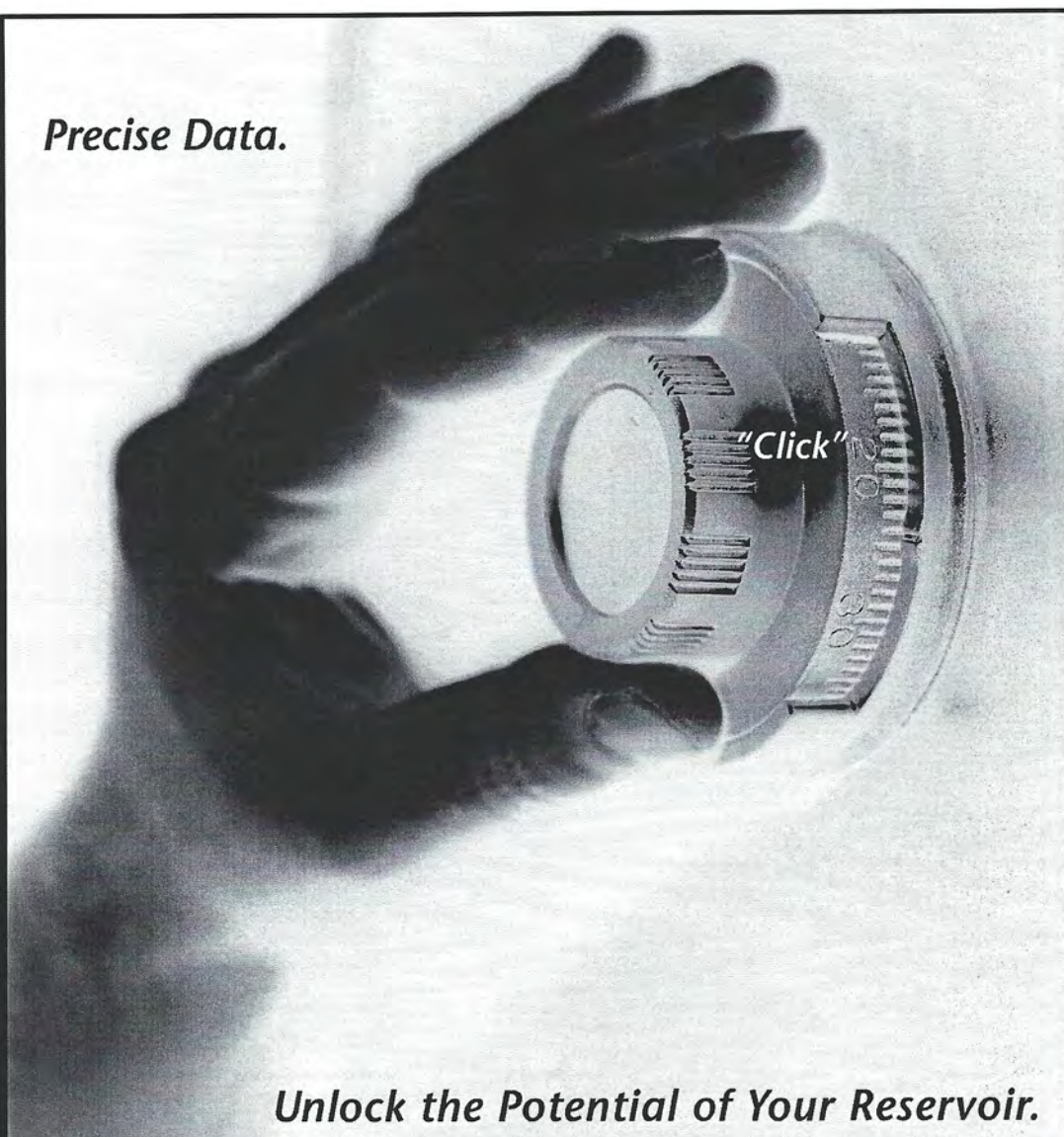
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GLOBAL STRATIGRAPHY AND THE GEOLOGY OF MISSISSIPPI

David T. Dockery III

Global Stratigraphy and the Geology of Mississippi (GSGM) will be the first book on the geology of Mississippi since the publication of *Geology and Mineral Resources of Mississippi* by Lowe in 1925. The present single-spaced manuscript, not including figures, is 867 pages long and includes some 4,000 references in the References Cited section. As the title suggests, the GSGM text is a reference-rich work that places the geology of Mississippi in the context of global stratigraphy. To that end, a decade of the latest publications from such journals as *Nature*, *Science*, and *Science News*, concerning ground-breaking work in global stratigraphy, was incorporated in the text. Also, all the publications of the Mississippi Office of Geology and all articles in the *Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies Transactions*, *Geology*, and *Journal of Paleontology*, were reviewed for relevant articles on the geology of Mississippi. The MDEQ Office of Geology is looking for a way to fund publication of the book.

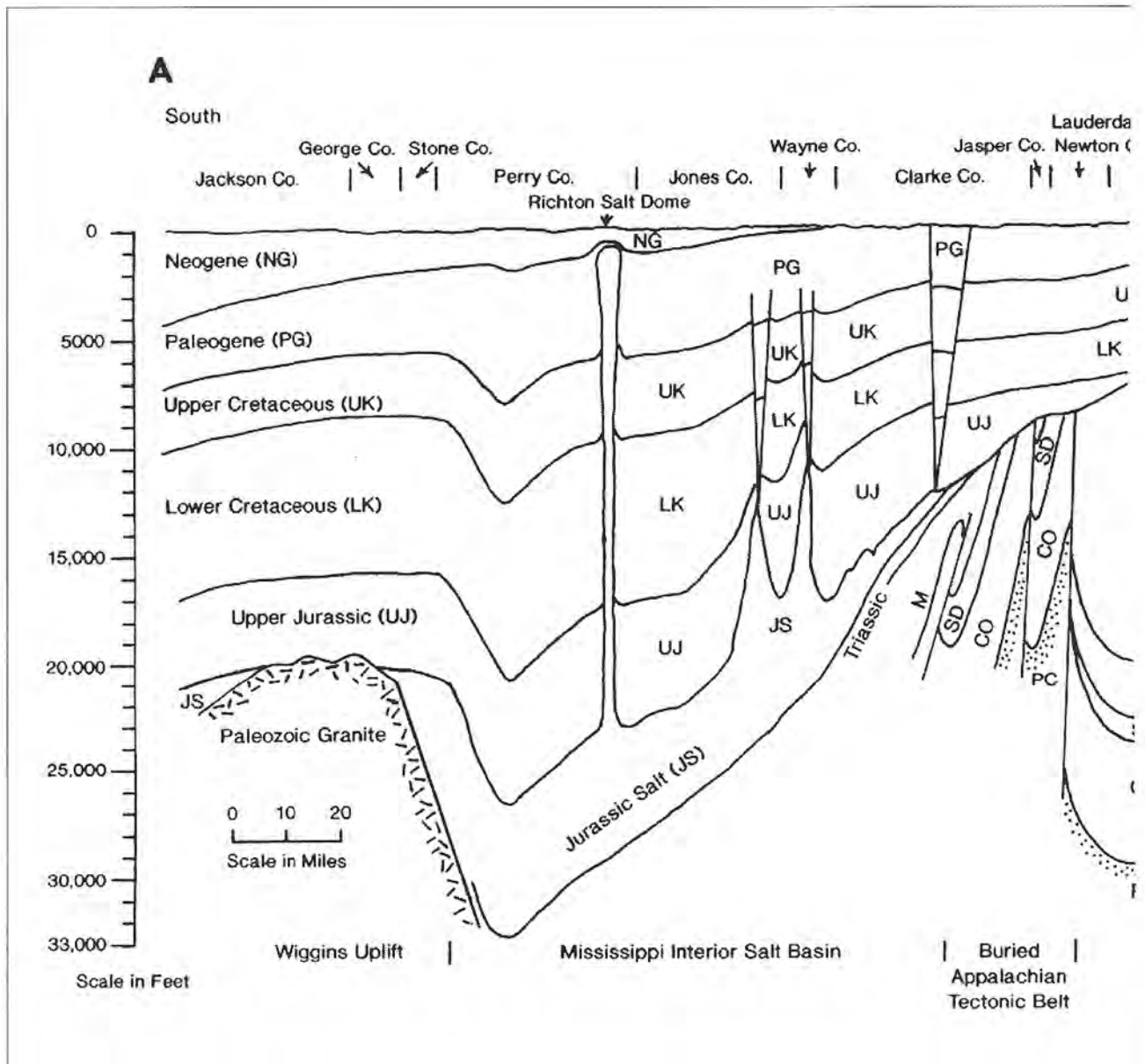
The following are some interesting aspects of the state's geology taken at random from the GSGM text:

Geography and Physiography section: Mississippi is the fourth flattest of the 50 states, preceded in flatness only by Louisiana, Delaware, and Florida. The highest counties in Mississippi are Tishomingo (806 feet above sea level), Prentiss (791 feet), and Tippah (787 feet). The most rugged county is Kemper County with 546 feet of relief, and the flattest county is Quitman County with only 51 feet of relief.

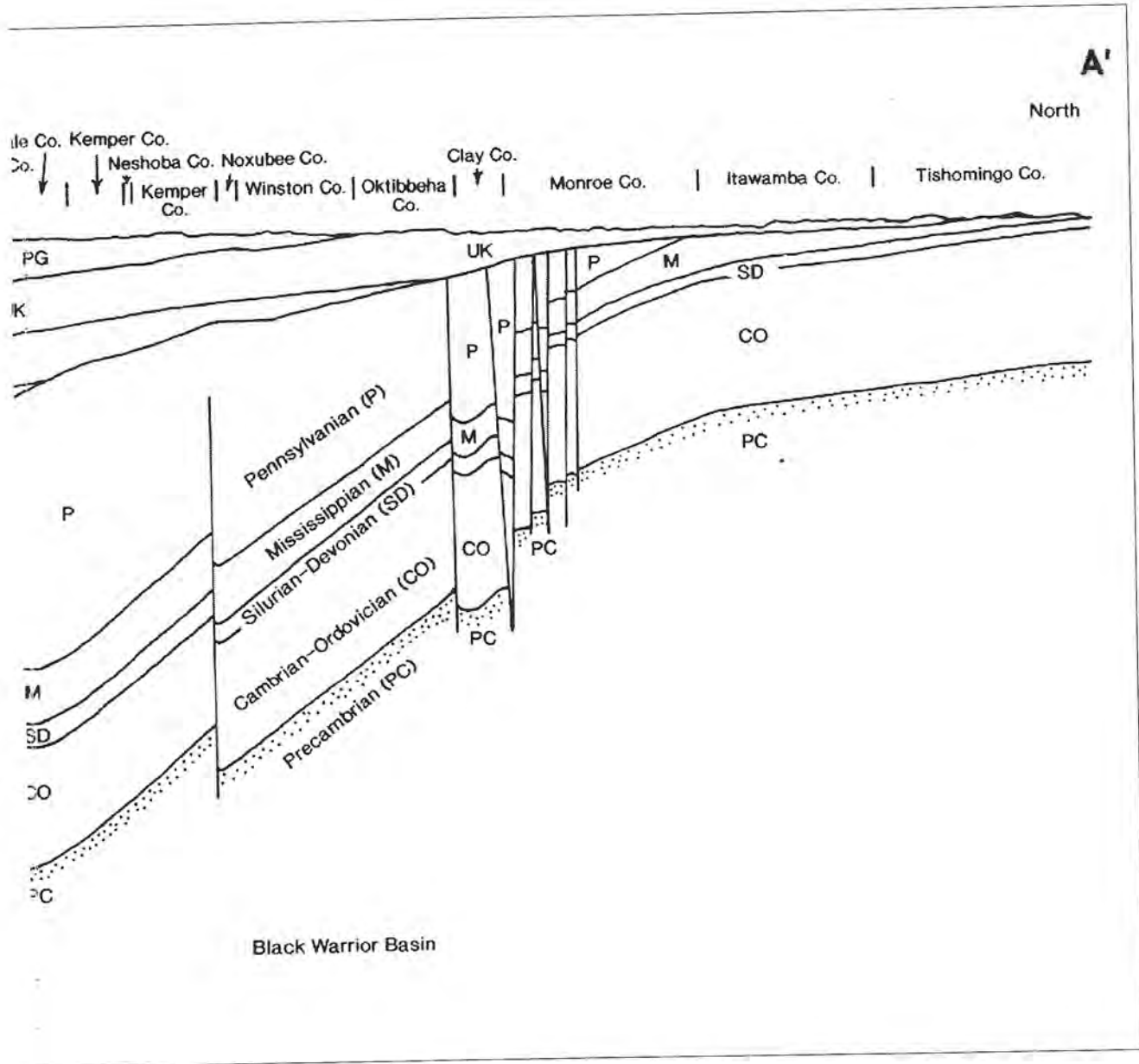
Oil and Gas section: Schmoker's (1999) list of giant fields in the United States includes only three fields in Mississippi: Baxter Field with an estimated total recovery of 257.4 mmbo, Heidelberg Field with 201.6 mmbo, and Tinsley Field with 226.1 mmbo. The deepest oil test well in Mississippi is the Placid Oil Company #1 Owen 25-8 near Utica in Hinds County with a total depth in the Norphlet Formation at 25,460 feet (4.82 miles).

Ground Water section: Ground water accounts for 80% of the state's water supply and is used for public water supplies, irrigation, and electric generation. Only three of Mississippi's 1,535 public water systems utilize surface water. Even so, more ground water is pumped for agriculture (66%) and catfish ponds (15%) than for public water supplies (11%). The deepest water well in the state supplies the Choctaw Generation Plant in Choctaw County and has a screened interval at 2,830-3,170 feet with a water temperature of 120 degrees F.

Precambrian section: A current estimate on the age of the universe, based on analysis of the cosmic microwave background radiation, is 13.7 billion years old. The oldest and most distant visible object is a galaxy that is 13.24 billion light years away. The oldest known star is 12.5 billion years old, based on the star's observed radioactive



North-South Cross Section A-A' from the Mississippi-Tennessee State Line



to Horn Island in the Gulf of Mexico, modified from Williams (1969).

uranium 238 spectra. The age of the solar system is 4.567 billion years, based on the tungsten isotope composition of meteorites. The Earth-moon system was created just 30 million years after the birth of the solar system, when a Mars-sized object slammed into earth, knocking out enough mantle material to form the moon. The oldest known rocks are from the Inukjuak area in the northern reaches of Quebec Province on Hudson Bay in Canada and are 3.825 billion years old. The oldest known mineral grains are zircons from quartzites at Mount Narryer in Western Australia, which are 4.1 to 4.2 billion years old. The first life on earth is estimated to be 3.8 million years old based on the first appearance of isotopically light carbon of supposed organic origin. The oldest known Precambrian basement rocks in Mississippi are 790 million years old.

Permian section: The only known rocks of Permian age in Mississippi are the granite/gneiss of the Wiggins Uplift basement in Jackson County, which occur below 18,354 feet and are 270 to 300 million years old based on their radiometric ages.

Jurassic section: Organic rich matter in Upper Jurassic rocks worldwide account for the source of nearly 25% of the world's hydrocarbons, including 11.5% of the Persian Gulf oil, 5.5% of the West Siberian oil, 3.25% of the U. S. Gulf Coast oil, and 2.75% of the North Sea oil. Jurassic salt in the Mississippi Interior Salt Basin formed a "mother salt bed" of some 6,000 feet in thickness as determined from seismic sections. This salt produced 53 shallow salt domes in Mississippi with crests within 6,000 feet of the surface.

Cretaceous section: The Cretaceous period was a time of volcanic activity in the northern Gulf Coastal Plain. The Jackson Volcano beneath Jackson, Mississippi, reaches to within half a mile of the surface and was most active 75 million years ago. Carbon dioxide from this volcano charged Jurassic rocks to the north and east with so much carbon dioxide gas that Madison and Rankin counties hold, by one published estimate, one fourth of the national reserve. The Norphlet-Smackover-Haynesville section in these counties is estimated to hold 11 trillion cubic feet of carbon dioxide gas, which is equivalent to 8.5% of the national reserve. Salt water tested from the Jackson Gas Rock at 2,500 to 2,520 feet below the surface at Jackson, Mississippi, had water temperatures as high as 127 degrees F.

Cretaceous Dinosaurs: Mississippi has perhaps the oldest dinosaur remains of Late Cretaceous age known from North America. These remains include a hadrosaur from the Tombigbee Sand and remains of tyrannosaurs, hadrosaurs, and possibly dromaeosaurs from the McShan Formation. Recently, the 3-inch-long manus claw of an ornithomimid dinosaur was found in the Eutaw Formation at Columbus, Mississippi.

Eocene section: The Eocene of Mississippi is perhaps best known as the horizon of the state fossil, the archaeocete whale. Several archaeocete specimens have been excavated from the state, including a 70-foot-long specimen of *Basilosaurus cetoides* from the Clearview Landfill in Scott County. A replica of this specimen will be mounted and hung from the ceiling of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in January of 2006.

North American Rotary Rig Counts

The U.S. rotary rig count was up 12 rigs to 1,475 for the week of December 23, 2005 and is 17.3 percent higher than last year.

The number of rotary rigs drilling for oil was up 6 at 243. The number of rigs targeting oil is 59 rigs higher than last year's level of activity. Rigs drilling for oil currently represent 16.5% percent of total drilling activity.

Rigs directed toward natural gas were up 8 at 1,230. The number of rigs currently drilling for gas is 160 greater than last year's level of 1,070.

Year-over-year oil exploration in the US is up 32.1 percent. Gas exploration is up 15.0 percent. The weekly average of crude oil spot prices is 29.2 percent higher than last year and natural gas spot prices are up 95.3 percent.

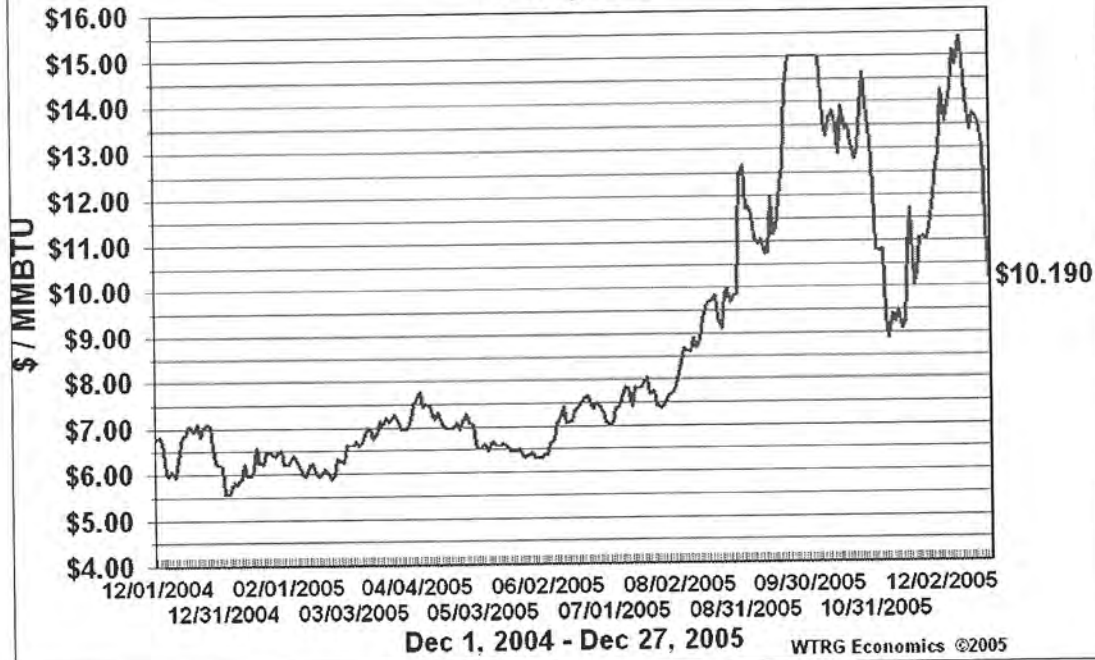
Canadian rig activity* was down 117 at 532 for the week of December 23, 2005 and is 161 rigs higher than last year's rig count. Canadian drilling falls rapidly in the spring to avoid environmental damage during the spring thaw and rainy season.

*The Canadian drilling industry experiences wide seasonal swings and even year over year comparisons can lead to incorrect conclusions.

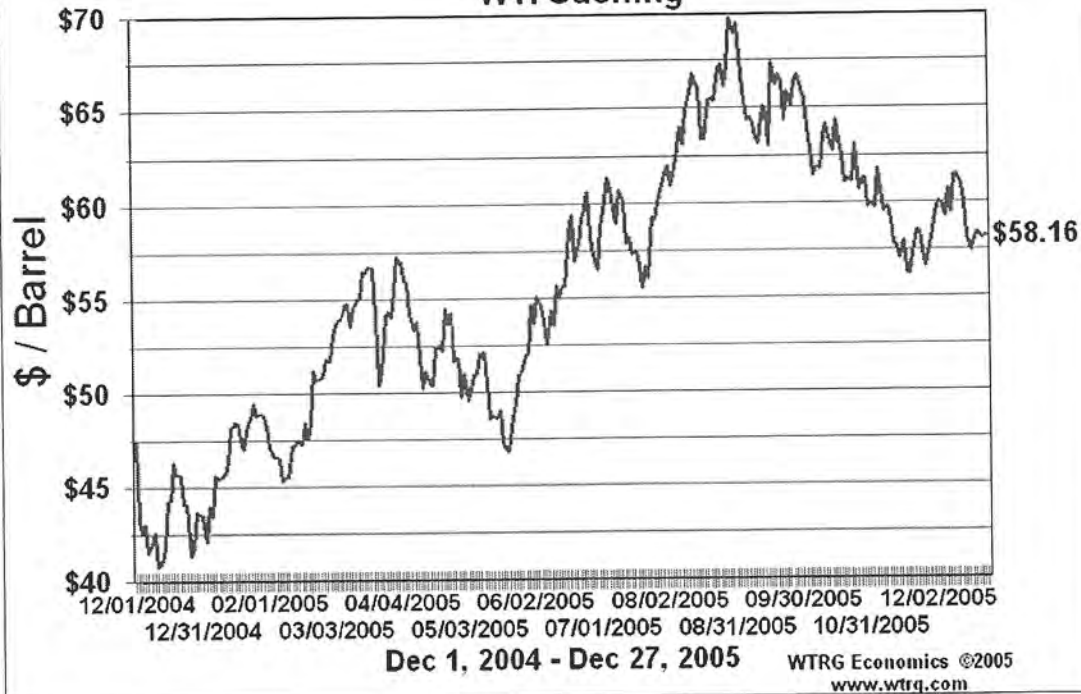
North American Rig Count

	12/23/05	12/16/05	12/24/04	Change		Percent Change	
				Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Total U.S.	1475	1463	1257	12	218	0.8%	17.3%
Offshore	79	74	107	5	-28	6.8%	-26.2%
Land	1396	1389	1150	7	246	0.5%	21.4%
Inland Waters	19	21	21	-2	-2	-9.5%	-9.5%
Oil	243	237	184	6	59	2.5%	32.1%
Percent	16.5%	16.2%	14.6%	0.3%	1.8%		
Gas	1230	1222	1070	8	160	0.7%	15.0%
Percent	83.4%	83.5%	85.1%	-0.1%	-1.7%		
Directional	351	352	314	-1	37	-0.3%	11.8%
Horizontal	221	221	132	0	89	0.0%	67.4%
Gulf of Mexico	75	70	101	5	-26	7.1%	-25.7%
Gulf Oil	36	31	8	5	28	16.1%	350.0%
Percent	48.0%	44.3%	7.9%	3.7%	40.1%		
Gulf Gas	39	39	93	0	-54	0.0%	-58.1%
Percent	52.0%	55.7%	92.1%	-3.7%	-40.1%		
Canada	532	649	371	-117	161	-18.0%	43.4%
North America	2007	2112	1628	-105	379	-5.0%	23.3%

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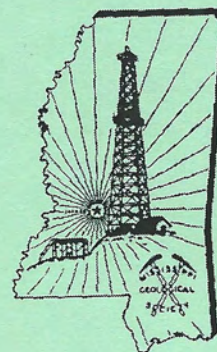
Volume 54

No. 6

February 2006

**MISSISSIPPI
GEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY
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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~
Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

Being the first of February, I hope everyone is returning to a normal routine and looking forward to Spring. We had a great start to our noon luncheons for 2006. If you weren't able to make it, you missed one of the more informative and entertaining talks that I have witnessed since becoming a MGS member.

I want to congratulate Marvin Oxley on his induction into the MGS Honorary Membership. Marvin still has a burning desire to study geology and find hydrocarbons, so don't let his new status fool you. I also want to thank Charlie Williams for his time and preparation in making the induction presentation.

Our own David Dockery will be our scheduled speaker for our next luncheon meeting on February 14th. David will give an overview on the manuscript he has written titled "Global Stratigraphy and the Geology of Mississippi. Also at the meeting, we will present Boland Scholarships to four geology students. I hope everyone will make a point to attend; not only to recognize these deserving students but to benefit from the countless hours that David has put into his work.

Thanks,
Todd Hines

The Mississippi Geological Society and L. F. Boland Scholarship Fund greatly appreciate the generous contribution made by Marvin Oxley following his induction as an honorary member of the Society at the January meeting. Marvin made the donation in memory and in honor of all previous honorary members.



In This Issue:

Meeting Schedule & Speaker's Bio
Cajun Jokes
Geology of Mississippi & Its Global Context
Rig Count
Oil & Gas Spot Market Graphs
MGS Membership Application
MGS Advertising Notice

MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 22, 2005	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 11, 2005	'A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir—Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama'	Capitol Club
November 8, 2005	'MDEM – The MS Digital Earth Model', Cragin Knox	Capitol Club
December 10, 2005	MAPL/MGS Christmas Party	Colonial Country Club
January 10, 2006	'The Barnett Shale Play of North Texas: Myths Exposed, Truths Revealed'	Capitol Club
February 14, 2006	'Global Stratigraphy and the Geology of MS', David Dockery	Capitol Club
March 14, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
April 11, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
May 11, 2006	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club

David Dockery received a B.S. degree in petroleum geology from Mississippi State University, a M.S. degree in geology from the University of Mississippi, and a doctorate degree in paleontology from Tulane University as the first student in a Ph.D. consortium program between Tulane and Duke University, in which he studied two years at Tulane and one year at Duke. His work career with the Mississippi Office of Geology began as a summer "Sunbeam" from 1969-1978. During this time he cut cores and worked as a driller's helper in the drilling programs for the Rankin, Smith, and Wayne County geology bulletins. In 1978 he began full-time work with the Mississippi Geological Survey in the Surface Geology Division. He has directed the state's geologic mapping program for last 25 years and has 165 published articles, including seven books on the paleontology and stratigraphy of Mississippi. In 1993, he was the first recipient of the Paleontological Research Institution's (Ithaca, New York) Gilbert Harris Award in recognition of excellence in systematic paleontology. That year he was also awarded the SEPM Gulf Coast Section's Distinguished Service Award.

OFFICERS MEETINGS

September 6, 2005
 October 4, 2005
 November 1, 2005
 December 6, 2005
 January 3, 2006
 February 7, 2006
 March 7, 2006
 April 4, 2006
 May 2, 2006

Hang Gliding Over the Bayou

In South Louisiana you don't see too many people hang-gliding. Well, T-Boy Broussard decided to save up some money and buy a hang-glider.

He buys it and gets one of his friends to pull him behind his pickup truck on the levee into the wind. He takes off a-running while his buddy starts to pull him down the levee, and sure enough the glider starts to rise into the wind. T-Boy turns loose of the rope and begins to soar over the bayou.

Meanwhile, Mama and Papa Broussard were sitting on the gallery of their houseboat talking about the good old days, when Mama spots the biggest bird she has ever seen. "Maise look the size of that bird," she says to her husband. Papa Broussard gets up and says, "Get the gun, quick sha." She runs into the houseboat and comes back with his pump shotgun.

He takes it, takes careful aim . . . bang, bang, bang! The monster-size bird continues to sail silently over the bayou.

"Maise, I think you missed it, Papa."

"Maise yea," he replies, "but at least he let go of T-Boy."

Alligator Shoes

A young blond was on vacation in New Iberia. She wanted a pair of genuine alligator shoes in the worst way, but was very reluctant to pay the price the local merchant, Thibodeaux, was asking.

After being very frustrated with Thibodeaux's "no hassle" attitude, she shouted, "Maybe I'll just go out and catch my own alligator so I can get a pair of shoes at a reasonable price!"

Thibodeaux said, "By all means, be my guest. Maybe you'll luck out and catch yourself a big one."

Determined, the young blond turned and headed toward the swamp on Marsh Island in a motorboat she had rented, set on catching herself an alligator.

Later in the day, Thibodeaux was going to a state camp on Marsh Island when he spotted the young blond standing waist-deep in water, shotgun in hand. Just then, he saw a 9-foot alligator swimming quickly toward her. She took aim, killed the creature, and with a great deal of effort hauled it on the swamp bank.

Lying nearby were several more dead alligators. Thibodeaux watched in amazement as the blond flipped the alligator on its back and, frustrated, shouted, "Darn it, this one isn't wearing any shoes either!"

From *The Daily Iberian*

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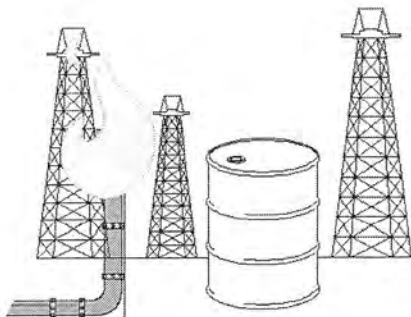
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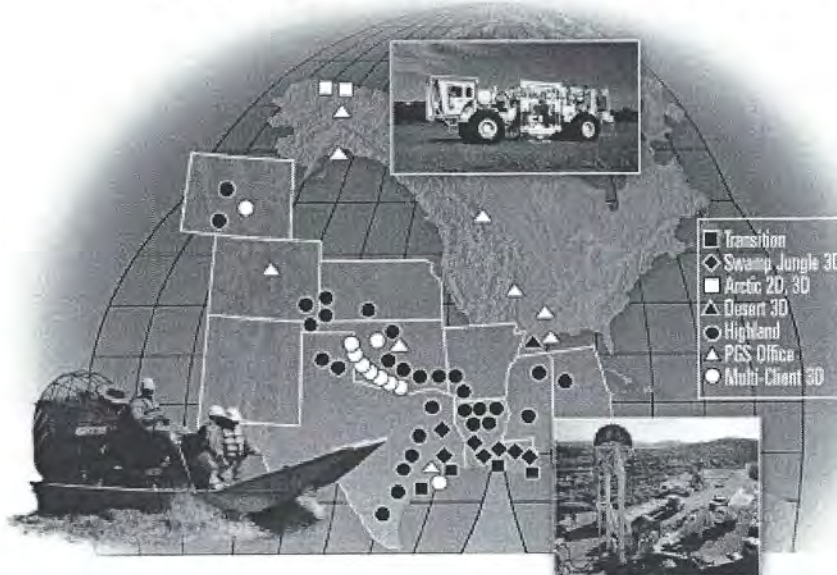
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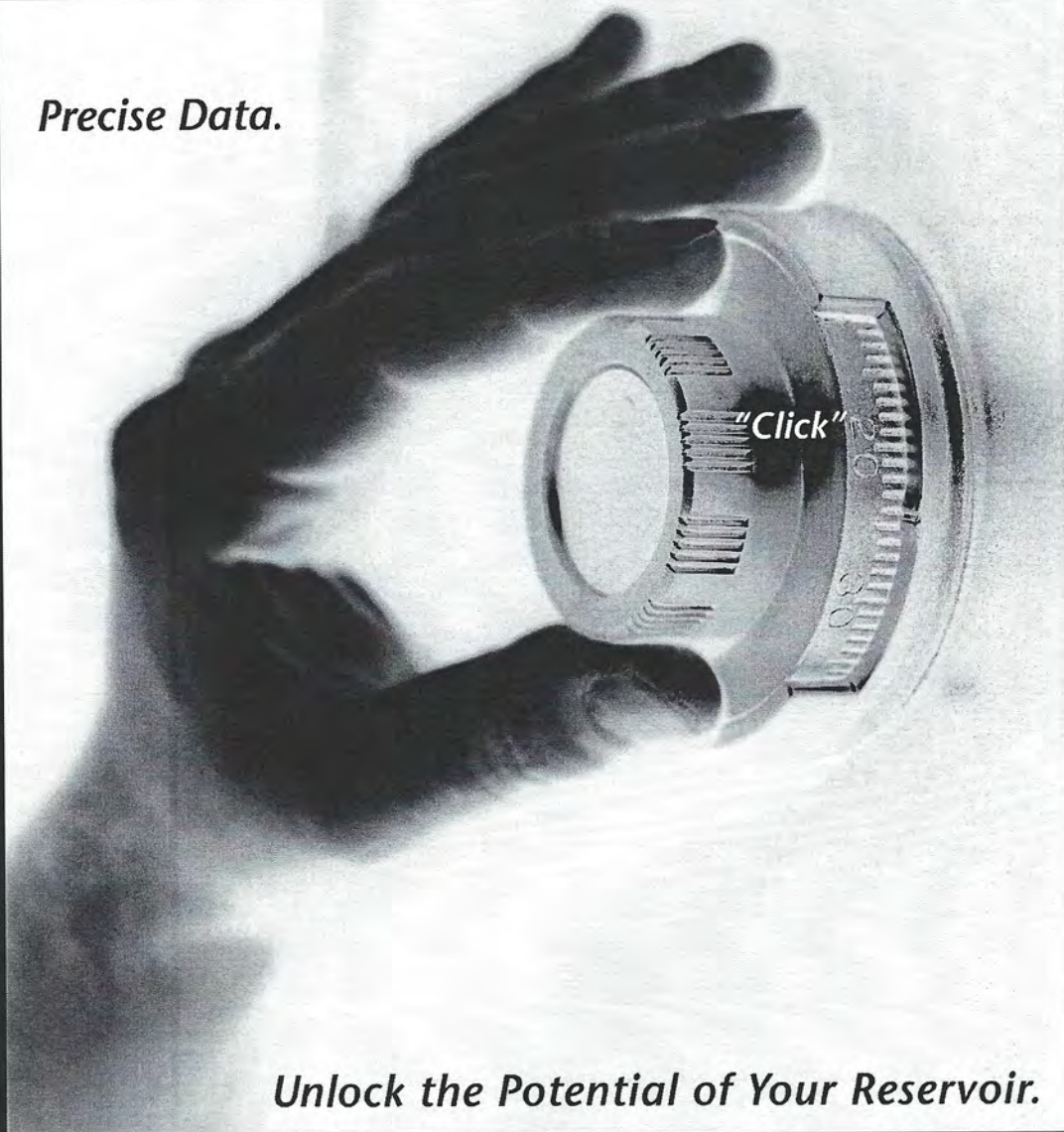
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THE GEOLOGY OF MISSISSIPPI AND ITS GLOBAL CONTEXT.
PART 2. PARADISE LOST

David T. Dockery III
Mississippi Office of Geology

A change in global climate at the end of the Eocene Epoch was summed up in a book entitled: *The Eocene-Oligocene Transition: Paradise Lost* (Prothero, 1994). This change from a warm, equitable climate to one with cold winters and Arctic ice was accompanied by the extinction of such diverse animals as the archaeocete whales and planicostate-venericard clams. There is no better place to study this important transition than in the Late Eocene Jackson Group of northwestern Hinds County, where the Yazoo Clay section is 450 feet thick and the upper 50 feet, above a bentonite dated at 33.7 million years old (the same age as calculated for the boundary stratotype in Italy), is of possible Oligocene age. Perhaps the last archaeocete whale was the Clearview specimen excavated in 2002 from the upper Yazoo Clay just 22 feet below the Yazoo-Forest Hill contact in Scott County, Mississippi. A composite of this whale and one from Louisiana was mounted in the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science on January 6, 2006. Oxygen isotopes from the spires of cone shells collected from the Moodys Branch Formation at Jackson indicate Eocene seasonal variations of water temperatures in which the winter temperatures were well above freezing.

With today's concerns over global warming, the Eocene-Oligocene climate transition is of much interest. Oxygen isotopes from deep-sea cores indicate decreased levels in carbon dioxide across the boundary, perhaps due to the weathering of rocks uplifted in the young Himalayan Mountains. However, something closer to home may have aided the climatic demise. The discovery in 1996 of a large impact crater beneath Chesapeake Bay explained the presence of the Exmore Boulder Bed encountered in cores from Exmore, Virginia, and offshore of New Jersey. It also explained the Late Eocene tektite strewn field in Georgia. The Chesapeake Bay impact may have been a one-two punch, as the Popigal Impact Structure in central Siberia, the fifth largest impact crater on Earth, is the same age at 35.7 million years old.

The Early Oligocene marine section of the Vicksburg Group in Mississippi is the most diversely fossiliferous marine section of that age in the Western Hemisphere. The Vicksburg and underlying Jackson groups are correlated around the Gulf margin as time-rock stratigraphic horizons. In the oil fields of Texas, the Jackson Group thickens in down-dip sections from 600 to 1,200 feet. There, the Jackson-age Fayette Fluvial-Delta System in the Seventy-Six West Oil Field in Duval County produced 4.6 million barrels from the time of its discovery in 1954 to 1990. In the "Vicksburg Fairway Area" along the lower Texas coast in Hidalgo County, the Vicksburg section expands on the downthrown side of faults to more than 4,000 feet and in some places 7,000 feet. In the Tijenia-Canales-Blucher Field in Kleberg and Jim Wells counties the cumulative production in 1986 from the Frio and Vicksburg sections was 14.7 million barrels of oil and condensate and 231 billion cubic feet of gas.

In Jackson and Vicksburg times, the Gulf Stream flowed across the Panhandle of Florida and southeastern Georgia, cutting a channel known as the Gulf Trough or Suwannee Channel. Late Eocene limestone units on the east side of the Gulf Trough contain molluscan taxa common to the Tethyan faunas of Europe. Some of these Tethyan taxa are also found in the Jackson and Vicksburg groups of Mississippi. The discovery of large land mammal fossils in the Byram Formation of the Vicksburg Group in Mississippi, including the skull of the hippopotamus-like *Metamynodon planifrons* and the lower jaws of the rhinoceros *Subhyracodon occidentalis*, made it possible to correlate the Lower Oligocene marine section of the Gulf Coast with the Orellan, a North American Land Mammal Age of the Western Interior.

The Oligocene-Miocene boundary is now the boundary of the Paleogene and Neogene periods, the latter being a word that means "new birth." The Miocene was a time of renewed uplift and erosion in the Rocky Mountains. Sediments transported from these mountains formed the Great Plains and formed a thick clastic wedge along the northwestern Gulf Basin. In southwestern Louisiana, the Miocene section is up to 24,000 feet thick. In southwestern Mississippi, the Miocene reaches thicknesses up to 5,000 feet. In Alabama, the cumulative gas production of the Mobile Bay Miocene section (as of 1998) was 103 billion cubic feet. The first Miocene gas production from Mississippi was from the *Amphistegina* B Zone in Mariner Field in Hancock County, which produced from 2 to 3 million cubic feet per day.

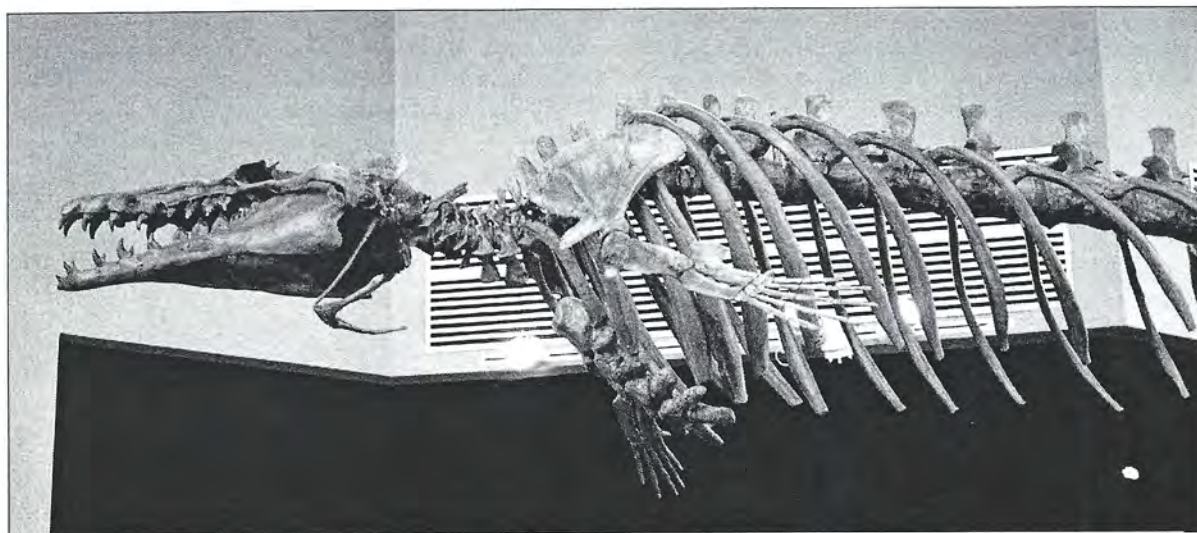
The Miocene of Mississippi marks a change from marine to fluvial and deltaic sedimentation. Sea-level lowstands in the Miocene were of such a magnitude that the New Jersey continental shelf was exposed multiple times. Sand-filled channels in the Catahoula Formation in Mississippi cut deeply into the Vicksburg Group in various places across the state. In some places, these sands were cemented with opal, derived from altered volcanic ash, to form quartzite ledges.

The Late Pliocene and Pleistocene epochs were a time more commonly known as the Ice Age, a time when continental ice sheets covered large areas of North America, Europe, and Asia. Rocks eroded from the north-central United States can be found in the perched terraces of the Mississippi River, resting beneath Late Pleistocene loess deposits of the Mississippi Loess Hills. Gravels along the present Mississippi River contain about 10% igneous pebbles and cobbles. Rock flour from melted glacial ice covered the Mississippi River Alluvial Plain and was blown by prevailing westerly and sometimes northerly winds to accumulations of over 100 feet along the valley wall from Vicksburg to Natchez, Mississippi.

The rich soils of Mississippi's loess belt made the early plantation settlement of Natchez a concentration of millionaires. Many settlers came from the tired soils of North Carolina and Georgia and elsewhere to farm the loess soils in Mississippi. The writer's family came from Richmond County, North Carolina, some before and some after the Civil War, to farm the loess soils of DeSoto County. The next family move was the clearing of Delta forests and the agricultural use of the rich Mississippi River alluvial soils. The Will Dockery Plantation between Cleveland and Ruleville in Sunflower County, Mississippi, was "the birthplace of the Delta Blues." Rich loess soils support populations in Europe and Asia as well as North America and Canada, the latter being the bread basket of the world. Without them, agricultural production might not sustain our present global population.

Reference Cited

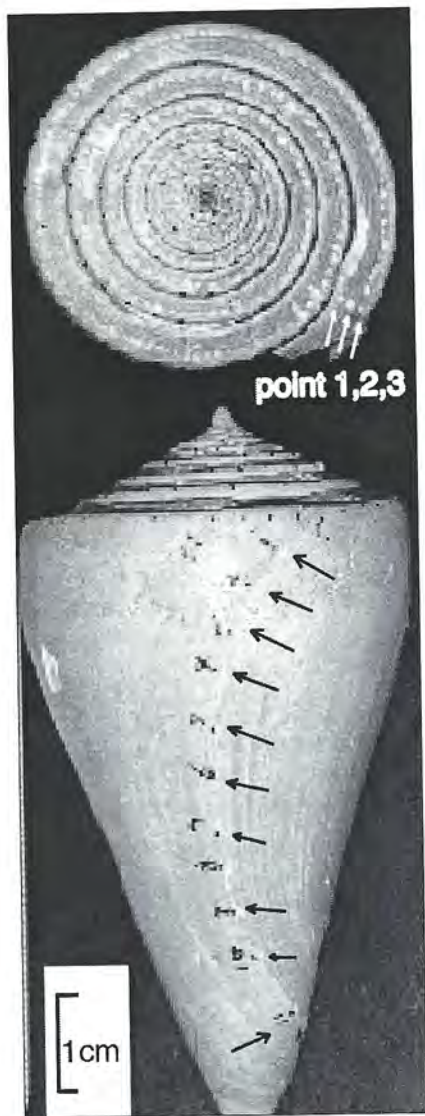
Prothero, D. R., 1994, *The Eocene/Oligocene transition: Paradise lost*: Columbia University Press, New York, 291 p.



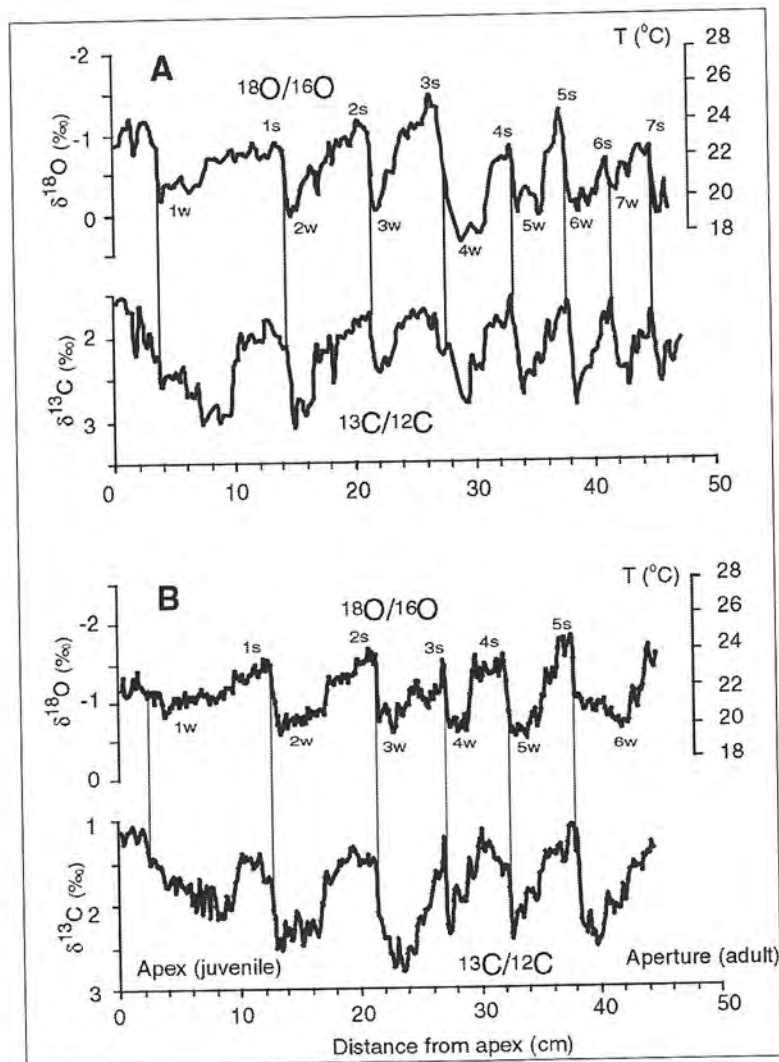
Skeleton of *Basilosaurus cetoides* mounted at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, a composite cast of specimens from Clearview, MS, and Montgomery Landing, LA.



Seed house of the Will Dockery Plantation, the birthplace of the Delta Blues.



Moodys Branch *Conus* shell. Oxygen & carbon isotope samples are indicated by tiny pits drilling in the spire (top). Black arrows point to samples points along a growth band. The latter samples were to insure isotope consistency for a single growth period.



Oxygen & carbon isotope profiles of *Conus tortilis* from the Moodys Branch Formation at Jackson, Mississippi. Profile A is of the shell at the right, which shows 8 years of growth with summer peaks pointing up and winter lows in the troughs. Water temperatures in degrees Centigrade are shown on the scale at the right. Profile B is of a similar specimen from the same locality. The records were published by Takuro Kobashi and Ethan Grossmann (2003) in *Paleontological Research*, a publication of the Paleontological Society of Japan.

North American Rotary Rig Counts

The U.S. rotary rig count was up 15 rigs to 1,487 for the week of January 27, 2006 and is 18.4 percent higher than last year.

The number of rotary rigs drilling for oil was down 10 at 237. The number of rigs targeting oil is 52 rigs higher than last year's level of activity. Rigs currently drilling for oil represent 28.1% percent of total drilling activity.

Rigs directed toward natural gas were up 25 at 1,247. The number of rigs currently drilling for gas is 178 greater than last year's level of 1,069.

Year-over-year oil exploration in the US is up 28.1 percent. Gas exploration is up 16.7 percent. The weekly average of crude oil spot prices is 36.3 percent higher than last year and natural gas spot prices are up 29.0 percent.

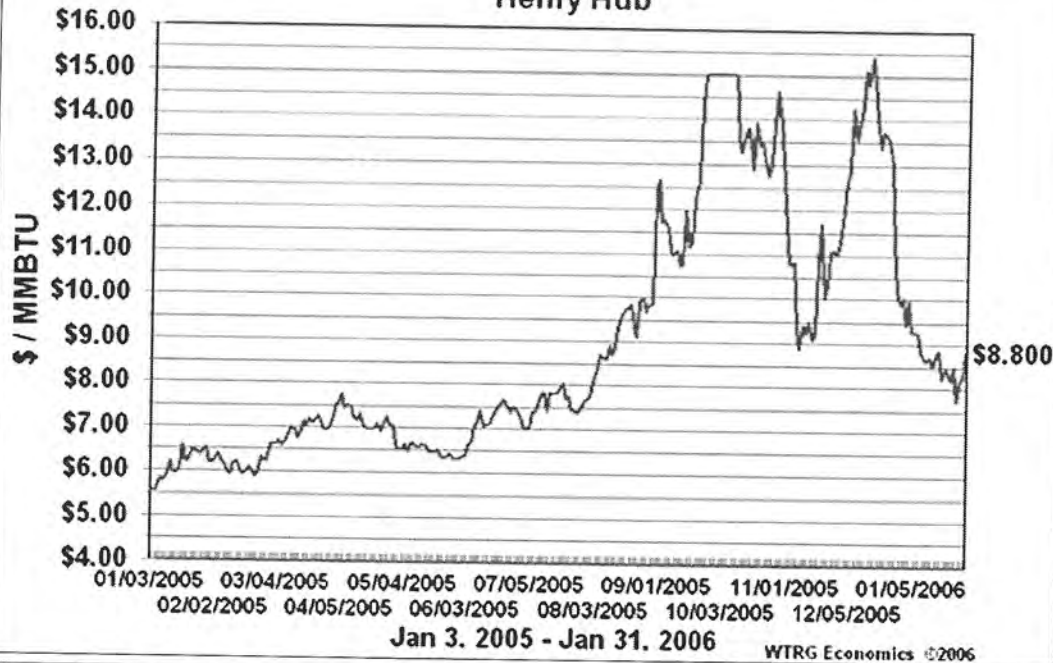
Canadian rig activity* was up 23 at 698 for the week of January 27, 2006 and is 104 rigs higher than last year's rig count. Canadian drilling falls rapidly in the spring to avoid environmental damage during the spring thaw and rainy season.

*The Canadian drilling industry experiences wide seasonal swings and even year over year comparisons can lead to incorrect conclusions.

North American Rig Count

	01/27/06	01/20/06	01/28/05	Change		Percent Change	
				Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Total U.S.	1487	1472	1256	15	231	1.0%	18.4%
Offshore	72	76	102	-4	-30	-5.3%	-29.4%
Land	1415	1396	1154	19	261	1.4%	22.6%
Inland Waters	20	20	24	0	-4	0.0%	-16.7%
Oil	237	247	185	-10	52	-4.0%	28.1%
Percent	15.9%	16.8%	14.7%	-0.8%	1.2%		
Gas	1247	1222	1069	25	178	2.0%	16.7%
Percent	83.9%	83.0%	85.1%	0.8%	-1.3%		
Directional	368	362	331	6	37	1.7%	11.2%
Horizontal	233	234	135	-1	98	-0.4%	72.6%
Gulf of Mexico	69	73	95	-4	-26	-5.5%	-27.4%
Gulf Oil	37	38	7	-1	30	-2.6%	428.6%
Percent	53.6%	52.1%	7.4%	1.6%	46.3%		
Gulf Gas	32	35	88	-3	-56	-8.6%	-63.6%
Percent	46.4%	47.9%	92.6%	-1.6%	-46.3%		
Canada	698	675	594	23	104	3.4%	17.5%
North America	2185	2147	1850	38	335	1.8%	18.1%

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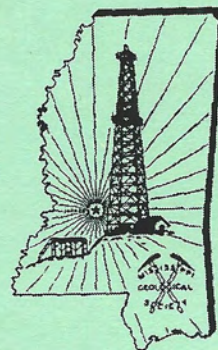
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March 2006

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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~
Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

Thanks again to David Dockery for an overview on his manuscript at last month's luncheon meeting. David has accumulated a wealth of information on Mississippi geology with plans to have the manuscript published one day. At this month's luncheon, Tim Lewis with Penn Virginia Oil & Gas will be our speaker. Tim's presentation is titled "Geologic & Economic Review of Horizontal Coalbed Methane Development, Southern West Virginia. Penn Virginia has been using this process successfully outside of the prime coalbed methane areas that have previously been developed. His talk should have applications in the Black Warrior Basin coalbed methane play.

Congratulations go out to our four Boland Scholarship recipients. Based on their bio's, they were all excellent choices. I also want to thank Dave Cate, Bob Schneeflock, Jerry Zoble and James Starnes for the job they did in interviewing and making these selections.

On March 23, Allen Cockrell will be signing his book, "Drilling Ahead: The Quest for Oil in the Deep South, 1945-2005", at Lemuria Bookstore from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.. Even if you have purchased a copy, make plans to drop by and let Allen sign it for you.

Thanks,
Todd Hines



In This Issue:

Meeting Schedule
Speaker's Bio & Abstract
Boland Scholarship Winners
The Search for Coalbed Methane in Mississippi
Notice of Proposed Legislation
Rig Count
Oil & Gas Spot Market Graphs
MGS Membership Application
MGS Advertising Notice

MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 22,	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 11, 2005	'A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir—Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama'	Capitol Club
November 8, 2005	'MDEM – The MS Digital Earth Model', Cragin Knox	Capitol Club
December 10, 2005	MAPL/MGS Christmas Party	Colonial Country Club
January 10, 2006	'The Barnett Shale Play of North Texas: Myths Exposed, Truths Revealed'	Capitol Club
February 14, 2006	'Global Stratigraphy and the Geology of MS', David Dockery	Capitol Club
March 14, 2006	'Geologic & Economic Review of Horizontal CBM Development, Southern West Virginia', Tim Lewis	Capitol Club
April 11, 2006	TBA	Capitol Club
May 11, 2006	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club

~ Book Signing ~

*Drilling Ahead: The Quest for Oil in the Deep
South, 1945-2005*

By Alan Cockrell

Lemuria Bookstore, Jackson, MS

Thursday, March 23, 2005

5:00 — 6:30 PM

OFFICERS MEETINGS

September 6, 2005

October 4, 2005

November 1, 2005

December 6, 2005

January 3, 2006

February 7, 2006

March 7, 2006

April 4, 2006

May 2, 2006

GEOLOGIC & ECONOMIC REVIEW OF HORIZONTAL CBM DEVELOPMENT, SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA

Since 2002, Penn Virginia Oil & Gas has been developing coalbed methane in Pennsylvanian aged coals via the CDX horizontal pinnate pattern and dual well process. To date Penn Virginia has drilled 76 horizontal patterns incorporating 6 coal seams, which are producing from 62 wells. Total lateral footage in coal is nearly 1.4 million feet (261 miles). Gross production exceeds 27 MMCFGPD.

Horizontal drilling has revitalized CBM development in southern West Virginia. Prior to introduction of this technique, production was limited to areas of structural closure or fracture enhancement (i.e. higher perm) and where vertical stacking of coal seams yielded adequate aggregate coal thickness (i.e. multi-seam areas). The vast majority of these "prime areas" had been developed in southern West Virginia but broad areas of untapped "non-structural" thin seams remained. Horizontal technology allows for increase exposure of the coal surface and cleats which in turn enable shorter dewatering periods, improved desorption, and higher initial production and recovery rates. In short, horizontal technology has allowed these otherwise "non-commercial coals" to become a producing reality.

Individual seam thickness ranges from 2-5 feet and vertical depth varies from 800-2000 feet. Gas contents range from 350-500 SCF/ton and the coals are of low-medium volatile bituminous rank. A single horizontal pattern may vary from 150-600 acres in size and possess 15,000-25,000 feet of drilled lateral in the coal. Most often a wellbore is completed in one coal but if geological conditions allow 2 or more seams can be stacked and produced. Typically, the wells produce gas immediately after drilling or go through a short dewatering stage (30-60 days). Initial gas rates vary from 300-6000 MCFPD and water rates range from a few barrels a day to 300-400 BWPD. Gross EUR vary from 500-3000 MMCF and average 1500 MMCF. Well life is estimated at less than 10 years.

Geologically, horizontal drilling demands a higher level of understanding of coal thickness, structure, roof and floor rock, cleat direction, local stratigraphy, and depositional environments. With more upfront G&G investment (i.e. core hole and well log data) and detailed mapping of individual seams the geologist and driller can achieve high percentage of coal drilling (+80% in-seam) and daily footage rates of 1000-2000 feet/day.

Tim Lewis

Education:

BS from Morehead State University, Morehead, KY, in 1980
MS from Wright State University, Dayton, OH, in 1986
Post graduate studies at University of Texas, Dallas, TX

Experience:

Tim has twenty-four years of petroleum geology experience in the eastern US, mid-continent and onshore Gulf Coast basins.

He has been employed by several oil and gas companies since receiving his BS, and is currently Vice-President of Exploration for the Eastern Region of Penn Virginia Oil & Gas Corporation.

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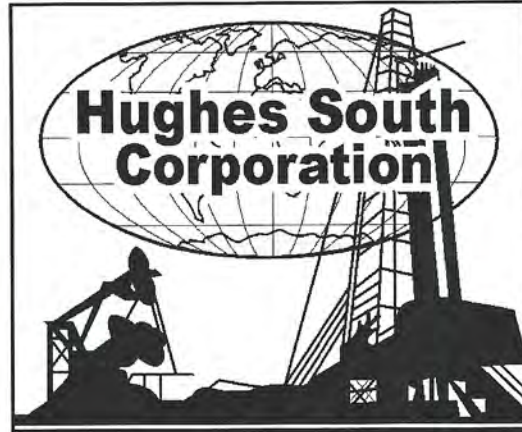
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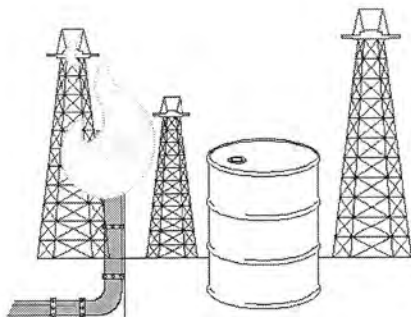
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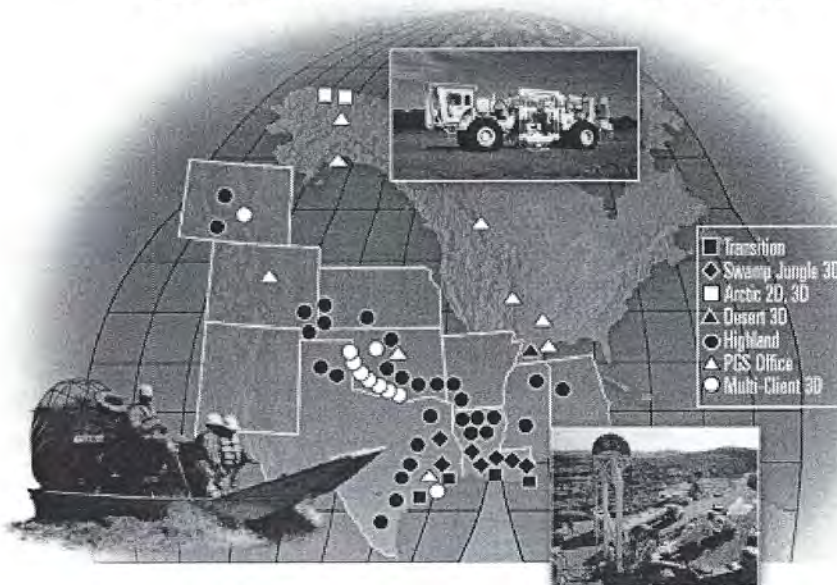
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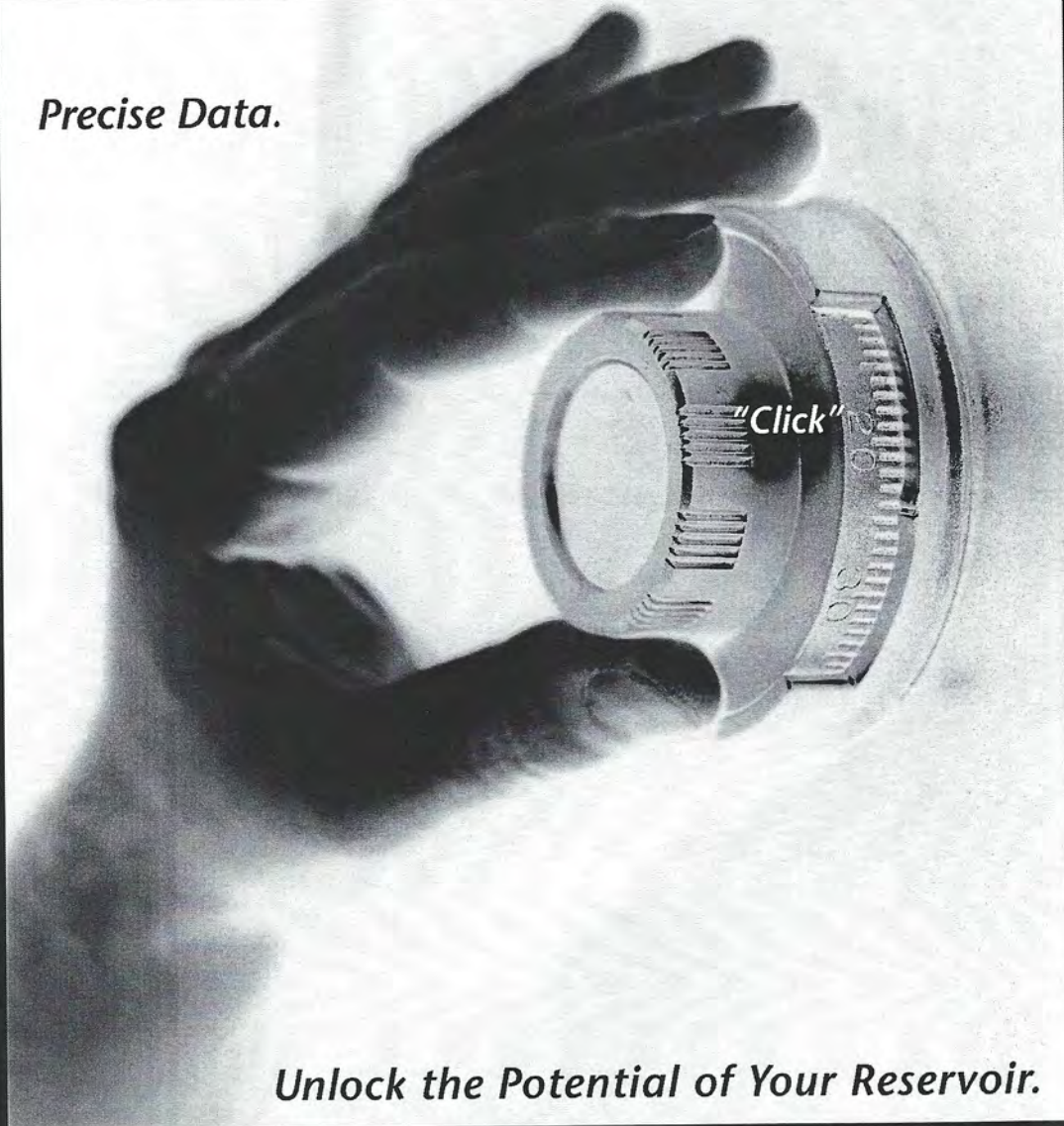
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2005-2006 BOLAND SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Mississippi Geological Society awarded its Boland Scholarship to four deserving students at the February 14 meeting. This group raises the total to 104 students to be honored by the Society for outstanding achievements in the geosciences since the awards began in 1980. Each student was awarded \$1,000 plus a framed and elaborate certificate denoting their achievement. They are:

Claire Rose, Millsaps College. Claire is from Flowood, Mississippi and a junior geology major at Millsaps with a cumulative 3.46 GPA and a 3.96 GPA in geology. After graduating next year, she plans to pursue a master's degree in geology. She works part-time for the USGS in its hydrology department and her career interests at this time are in the environmental field or with the USGS.

Robert C. Herr IV, University of Mississippi. Bob is from Mt. Vernon, Illinois and is a senior at Ole Miss with an overall 3.4 GPA and a 3.8 GPA in his major. He will graduate in May with a B.S degree in geological engineering, after which he plans to enter the oil business as a petroleum engineer. Bob has a taste of the oil world already, being the son of a petroleum engineer and having worked past summers as a roustabout.

Eric Dearman, University of Southern Mississippi. Eric is from Carriere, Mississippi and a senior at USM. He plans to graduate this August and then enter a master's program. He has GPA's of 3.56 overall and 3.78 in geology. Eric is a current recipient of the McCarty Honors Geology Scholarship at USM and is interested in a future career in either the petroleum business, environmental geology or oceanography.

Pieter van Thiel, Mississippi State University. Pieter is from Oceans Springs, Mississippi and is a senior at MSU. He expects to graduate this August and then pursue a master's degree. His career interests are in either the petroleum or hydrology fields. He has a 3.56 GPA and has earned the Dunn Memorial Scholarship at MSU. He has also served as a life support technician for Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Georgia since 2000.



L-R: Eric Dearman, Dr. Gail Russell, Dr. Jamie Harris, Claire Rose, Dr. Stanley Galicki, Robert C. Herr IV, Dr. R. P. Major, Pieter van Thiel, Dr. Darrell Schmitz.

THE SEARCH FOR COALBED METHANE IN MISSISSIPPI

By David T. Dockery III and James Starnes
Mississippi Office of Geology

According to Alan Cockrell in his book, "Drilling Ahead: The Quest for Oil in the Deep South, 1945-2005," Congress was compelled to find a better way of "degassifying" coal mines after a mine explosion in 1968 in Farmington, West Virginia, took the lives of 78 miners. This began the era of coalbed methane production.

Coal, with its many natural fractures, can store six to seven times more methane per rock volume than conventional gas reservoirs. The gas remains adsorbed due to the hydrostatic pressure of the surrounding ground water. To "desorb" the gas requires pumping away the ground water. The first commercial coalbed methane gas (CBM) was produced at the Jim Walters mine at Brookwood, Alabama, in 1981, where horizontal wells degassed the mine. Not only did the wells rid the mine of dangerous gas, but the gas could be sold.

One problem with coalbed methane production was the low volume of gas produced by CBM wells, typically only a few hundred cubic feet per day. But, in 1980, in Section 29 of the tax code, Congress gave tax credits to industries that produced energy from "unconventional" sources, such as coal gas methane. These tax credits led to a "phenomenal development in coalbed methane that occurred between 1989 and 1990," when over 4,000 CBM wells were drilled in western Alabama. The Brookwood CBM project alone had produced over 100 billion cubic feet of gas by the time the boom started. CBM companies have spent over \$2 billion in a four-county area of west-central Alabama. Today, Alabama produces nearly 116 billion cubic feet of coalbed methane gas per year, or approximately 30% of the state's total gas production. Over 6,000 CBM wells have been drilled in the state with a cumulative production of over 1.4 trillion cubic feet. CBM reserves in Alabama are estimated to exceed 3 trillion cubic feet of gas. Six of the Alabama Warrior Basin coalbed methane fields are listed in the top 100 producing gas fields in the U.S., making Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the undisputed coalbed methane capital of the world (Cockrell, 2005). CBM production has outlasted the Section 29 tax credits.

In April of 1992, Plantation Petroleum drilled the #1 Allen in Clay County, Mississippi, to a total depth of 3,382 feet to determine the coalbed methane potential of coal seams in the Pottsville Formation. The well was drilled and cased to 1,860 feet and then cored continuously to TD. The results found the coal seams to have a thin cumulative thickness and lower than anticipated gas content. Four coal groups were recognized in the core with a total of 17 seams.

Coalbed methane resources are also available in the Gulf Coast Tertiary section. The Paleocene Oak Hill lignite was noted by Toulmin (1944) and was mapped from Sumter to Wilcox counties in Alabama by Mancini (1981, 1983) where it measured from 2 to 11 feet in thickness and was indicated to be part of a marsh environment that extended across southeastern Mississippi. In the OSM #2 Wahalak core hole in Choctaw County, Alabama, Mancini (1981, p. 364) recorded an 11-foot thick lignite bed some 24 feet below the top of the Oak Hill section. This lignite is most likely the same seam as the big lignite encountered in the Osborn Heirs Co. #2 Rowell oil test in Jasper County, Mississippi, shown as well #3 of Figure 2 in Dockery (1990). Smith (1983) noted the Oak Hill lignite in Marengo and Choctaw counties in western Alabama to be of more uniform thickness than that of an extremely variable Nanafalia lignite in Barbour, Coffee, and Crenshaw counties in



Drill site of the #1 IPCH coalbed methane test well in Jasper County (Verba Field).

eastern Alabama.

In October and November of 2005, Penn Virginia Oil and Gas Corporation drilled the #1 IPCH coalbed methane test well in Section 17, T. 3 N., R. 12 E. in Jasper County, Mississippi, to a depth of 2,490 feet and cored from 2,490 to the target coal depth of 2,807 feet at the top of the Oak Hill lignite, which was 18 feet thick at the site. Total depth was reached at 2,830, just 5 feet below the lignite. The cored interval above the lignite is at the Mississippi Office of Geology and includes 25 boxes of core from 2,490 feet to 2,769 feet, an interval of 279 feet.

Reference Cited

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- Dockery, D. T., III, 1990, A revision of the Fearn Springs Formation and relocation of the Midway-Wilcox Group boundary in Mississippi: Mississippi Bureau of Geology, Circular 3, p. 21-23.
- Mancini, E. A., 1981, Lithostratigraphy and biostratigraphy of Paleocene subsurface strata in southwestern Alabama: Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies Transactions, v. 31, p. 359-367.
- Mancini, E. A., 1983, Depositional setting and characterization of the deep-basin Oak Hill lignite deposit (middle Paleocene) of southwest Alabama: Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies Transactions, v. 33, p. 329-337.
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- Toulmin, L. D., Jr., 1944, General features of the Tertiary formations in Alabama: Southeastern Geological Society (Guidebook) 1st Field Trip, June 1944, p. 5-15.

Notice

The Mississippi Board of Registered Professional Geologists has submitted a bill (Senate Bill 2913) to the legislature to make changes in the existing geological registration bill. This bill has passed the Senate and is now in the House.

Two points of particular interest are:

1. "and that the geologic work does not have an impact on the environment or on the public health, safety, or welfare" has been added to the exemption for petroleum geologists. (This language has been taken out of the House version, but the deletion would still have to be approved by the Senate.) Welfare has also been defined as "welfare means physical and financial welfare." This could possibly require that petroleum geologists be registered.
2. The new fee structure in this bill raises the maximum fee for registration from \$100 a year to \$200.

The complete bill can be viewed at the Mississippi Legislature website under Bill Status. If you should have any comments, please contact your representative; the sponsor of the bill, Senator Bob M. Dearing; or the House Committee Chairman, Representative John R. Reeves.

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House Committee Chairman: Representative John R. Reeves

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E-mail: jreeves@mail.house.state.ms.us

North American Rotary Rig Counts

The U.S. rotary rig count was down 2 rigs to 1,543 for the week of February 24, 2006 and is 20.5 percent higher than last year.

The number of rotary rigs drilling for oil is up 4 at 219. The number of rigs targeting oil is 30 rigs higher than last year's level of activity. Rigs drilling currently for oil represent 14.2% percent of total drilling activity.

Rigs directed toward natural gas were down 5 at 1,322. The number of rigs currently drilling for gas is 232 greater than last year's level of 1,090.

Year-over-year oil exploration in the US is up 15.9 percent. Gas exploration is up 21.3 percent. The weekly average of crude oil spot prices is 17.11 percent higher than last year and natural gas spot prices are up 22.05 percent.

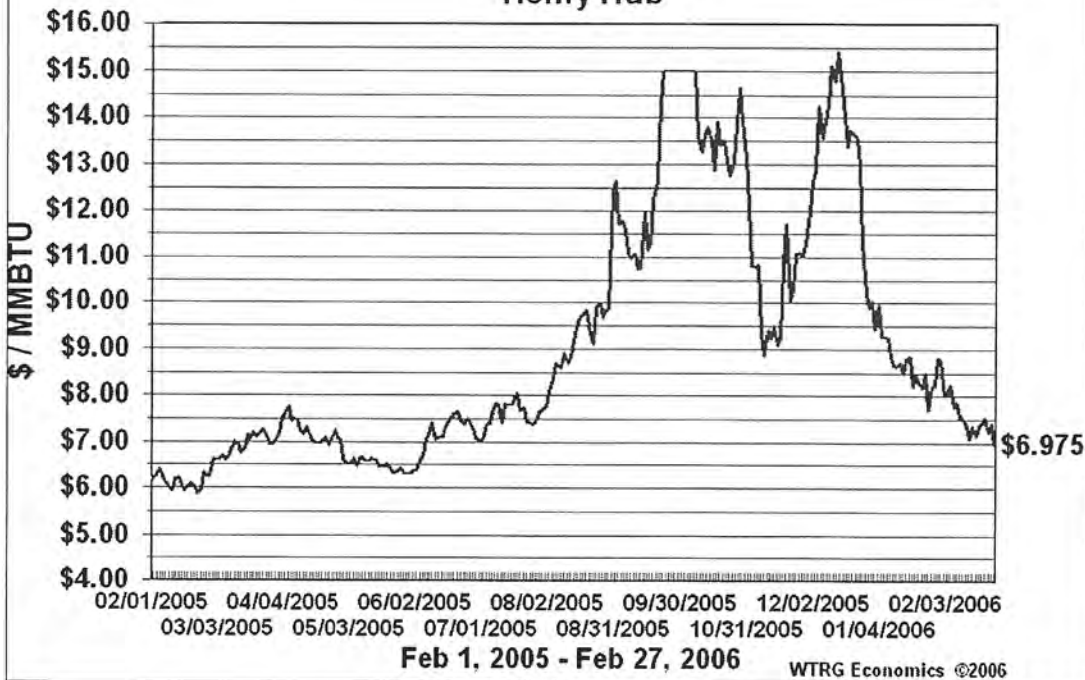
Canadian rig activity* was down 19 at 699 for the week of February 24, 2006 and is 82 rigs higher than last year's rig count. Canadian drilling falls rapidly in the spring to avoid environmental damage during the spring thaw and rainy season.

*The Canadian drilling industry experiences wide seasonal swings and even year over year comparisons can lead to incorrect conclusions.

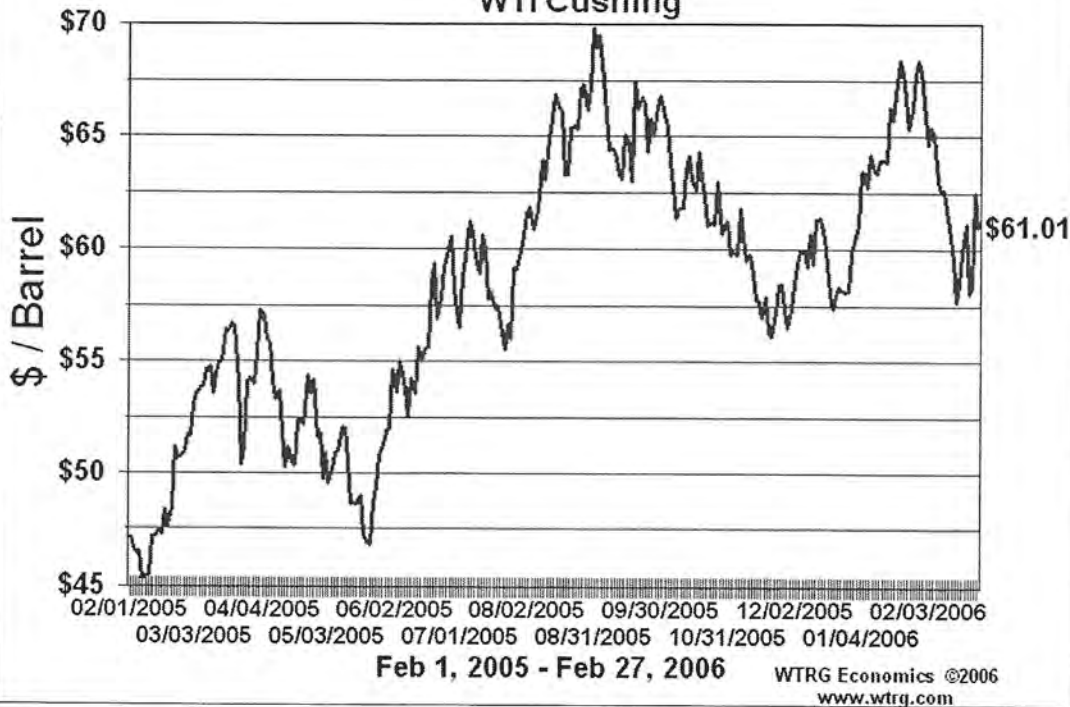
North American Rig Count

	02/24/06	02/17/06	02/25/05	Change		Percent Change	
				Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Total U.S.	1543	1545	1281	-2	262	-0.1%	20.5%
Offshore	86	79	105	7	-19	8.9%	-18.1%
Land	1457	1466	1176	-9	281	-0.6%	23.9%
Inland Waters	21	21	28	0	-7	0.0%	-25.0%
Oil	219	215	189	4	30	1.9%	15.9%
Percent	14.2%	13.9%	14.8%	0.3%	-0.6%		
Gas	1322	1327	1090	-5	232	-0.4%	21.3%
Percent	85.7%	85.9%	85.1%	-0.2%	0.6%		
Directional	367	363	356	4	11	1.1%	3.1%
Horizontal	250	255	149	-5	101	-2.0%	67.8%
Gulf of Mexico	84	78	99	6	-15	7.7%	-15.2%
Gulf Oil	7	8	6	-1	1	-12.5%	16.7%
Percent	8.3%	10.3%	6.1%	-1.9%	2.3%		
Gulf Gas	77	70	93	7	-16	10.0%	-17.2%
Percent	91.7%	89.7%	93.9%	1.9%	-2.3%		
Canada	699	718	617	-19	82	-2.6%	13.3%
North America	2242	2263	1898	-21	344	-0.9%	18.1%

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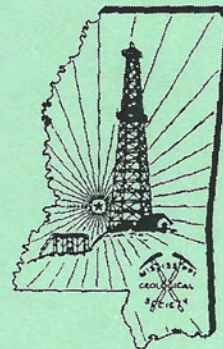
Volume 54

No. 8

April 2006

**MISSISSIPPI
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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~

Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

What better way to end our noon luncheon schedule on April 11th than with our own Bob Schneeflock. Bob will be presenting his paper on the Miocene potential of South Louisiana and how it could affect the Mississippi Sound. Bob has spent countless hours (and money) working this play so it is a chance to gain some valuable geologic insight.

Also at this month's meeting, we will be nominating officers for next year's board with elections being held at the Spring Fling on May 11th. If you would like to make a nomination and will be unable to make the meeting, please contact one of our officers. We are also in need of a replacement for the AAPG delegate position. Larry Baria has faithfully served for several years and is stepping down. If you regularly attend the yearly AAPG conventions and don't mind spending a few hours at the delegate meetings, please consider this position.

If you have not visited the MGS website (www.missgeo.com), you need to take the time and do so. Steve Walkinshaw has done a remarkable job in designing and updating the site. After seeing other society sites, I believe ours is one of the best. Thanks, Steve for your time and effort.

Thanks,

Todd Hines

April is:

National Humor Month
International Guitar Month
Keep America Beautiful Month
Lawn and Garden Month
Poetry Month
National Pecan Month
National Welding Month
Stress Awareness Month

Week 1: Read a Road Map Week
Week 2: Garden Week
Week 3: Organize Your Files Week
Week 4: National Karaoke Week



In This Issue:

Meeting Schedule
Speaker's Bio & Abstract
MGS Past Presidents
50 Years Ago
"Brave Fire Fighters"
Rig Count
Oil & Gas Spot Market Graphs
MGS Membership Application
MGS Advertising Notice

MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 22,	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 11, 2005	'A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir—Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama'	Capitol Club
November 8, 2005	'MDEM – The MS Digital Earth Model', Cragin Knox	Capitol Club
December 10, 2005	MAPL/MGS Christmas Party	Colonial Country Club
January 10, 2006	'The Barnett Shale Play of North Texas: Myths Exposed, Truths Revealed'	Capitol Club
February 14, 2006	'Global Stratigraphy and the Geology of MS', David Dockery	Capitol Club
March 14, 2006	'Geologic & Economic Review of Horizontal CBM Development, Southern West Virginia', Tim Lewis	Capitol Club
April 11, 2006	'Mississippi Sound - A view from the west side', Robert Schneeflock	Capitol Club
May 11, 2006	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club

Mississippi Sound - A view from the west side

The possible leasing of the Mississippi Sound has been highly controversial to say the very least.

"The Sound's" geologic potential has mostly been viewed from the Miocene and Norphlet successes of offshore Alabama to the east, Mariner field to the North, and the Miocene and James successes in the Federal waters to the south. This presentation will touch on those plays, but will largely focus on possible Miocene potential from the west in South Louisiana.

One of the bright spots adjoining "The Sound" flowed for months at over 70 mmcf/d (pipeline constrained) from the Chris I.

An unconformity on the scale of the Grand Canyon was imaged with additional pay found trapped beneath it.

This presentation will likely raise more geologic questions than it will provide answers.

OFFICERS MEETINGS

September 6, 2005

October 4, 2005

November 1, 2005

December 6, 2005

January 3, 2006

February 7, 2006

March 7, 2006

April 4, 2006

May 2, 2006

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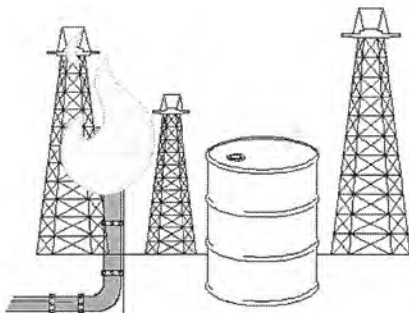
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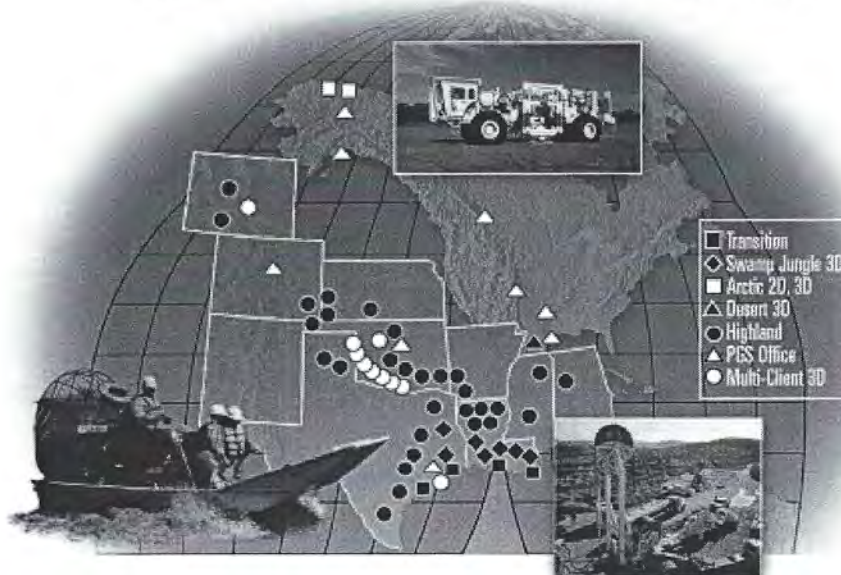
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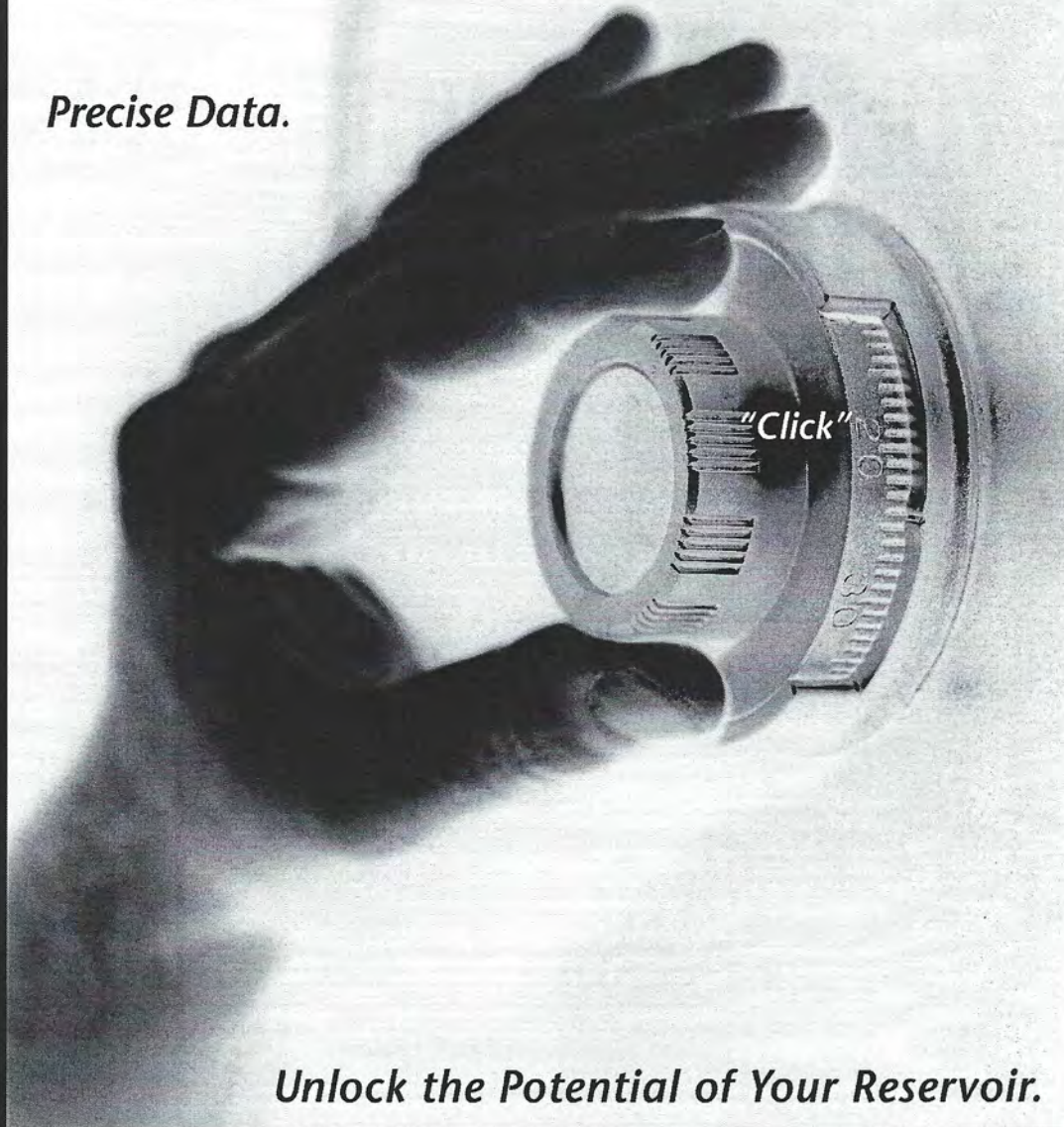
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50 Years Ago ~

Center of Gravity Shifts to Dixie

By Frank J. Gardner

From *The Oil and Gas Journal*, January 9, 1956

“If you were asked to name the single most important geological discovery of 1955, what would you say?” This question was asked of 20 prominent exploration men last month.

Almost without exception, the answer was the same: “Citronelle.”

“If you were asked to name our most likely future oil province, now unproductive or sparsely explored, what would you say?”

To this one, a heavy majority pointed a positive finger at the southeastern states.

“Reservewise what do you consider the most important strike in 1955?”

No exceptions here—offshore Louisiana.

The answers were not surprising, for in an exploratory year that can only be described as mediocre, there was little choice. Geologically, the choice was wide, for 1955 saw a score of geologically important strikes. Reservewise, the field was narrow, for not a single onshore discovery promised much barrelage for future reserves.

A shifting center of gravity . . . But the thing that strikes home is the emergence of Dixie-land as our most likely future oil province, and the shifting center of gravity in exploration to South Louisiana. That lush Gulf Coast area has seized the national spotlight as far as new fields, new reserves, and fantastic success ratios (40 to 70 percent) are concerned. It is far from being a **new** oil province, but its spectacular increase in activity and success is a 1955 exploration event to eclipse all others. It is a story of subsurface geology in “soft-rock” country.

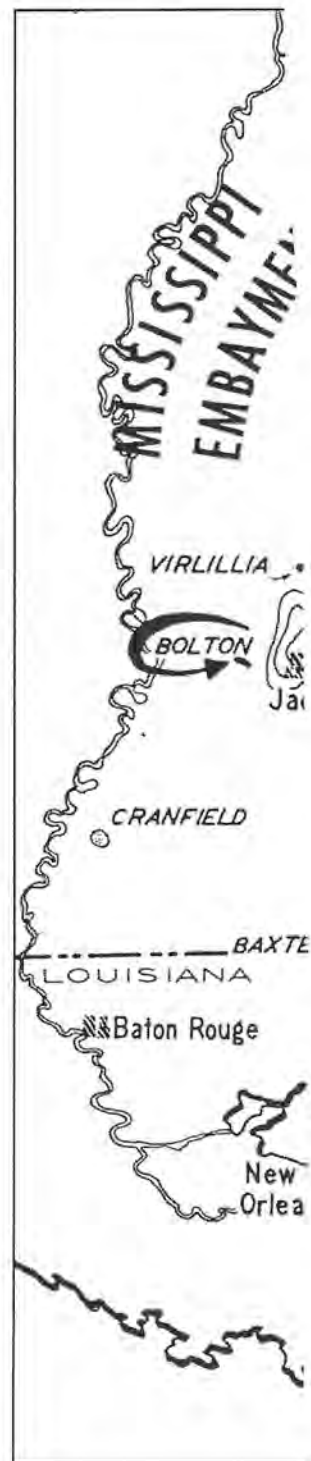
And an important discovery . . . As the year ended, Marshall Young et al of Jackson, Miss., moved right up to the fence that separates Louisiana from Mississippi and made a “hard-rock” discovery that challenges geological thinking and heightens Dixie’s interest even more. Ansley is its name. Young et al’s 1 Cuevas heirs, on a Sun Oil Co. farmout in southwestern Hancock County, Mississippi, was the discovery well (Section 30-9s-14w). On production test last week, it flowed at a rate of 264 bbl. of 41.8°-gravity green oil per day through 1/4-in. choke, plus 2,500 M.c.f. of gas per day; producing pay is Washita-Fredericksburg (Lower Cretaceous) perforated at 10,839½-511½ ft. At the moment, it is waiting on tanks for final potential test.

The real importance of this coastal strike is yet to be recognized, for it is believed to lie on a southwest limb or nosing off the west end of the Wiggins uplift, a regional anticline stretching across Mississippi's coastal counties in an east-west direction. Not much is known of the subsurface extent of the uplift, nor of its regional effect, but this discovery of good oil production on one of its flanks could have far-reaching effect on future Mississippi drilling programs.

It is known that the Tertiary sands of the coastal area sweep steeply upward against the uplift and that their feather edges may form potential traps. The Ansley discovery lends credence to the theory, for it went directly from the Heterostegina-Oligocene into Wilcox-Eocene sands, missing the entire Frio-Vicksburg section and the upper part of the Eocene (Jackson and Claiborne).

Indicate new campaigns for 1956 . . . Many operators look askance at the Lower Cretaceous search in the southeastern states, for experience so far indicates that exploration there turns into a search for porosity and permeability zones rather than for structure. They regard it as a "big-money" operation. But plans in the making by many companies indicate that they will take a searching second look with the newer geophysical tools throughout Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and northern Florida. The odds are even that many new fields are in the offing, and that 1956 will see another round of geologically significant strikes.

Two discoveries of 1955 were of great geological significance. Citronelle, in southwest Alabama, and Ansley, in southern Mississippi, were both Lower Cretaceous producers.





Brave fire fighters

The secret formulas are in the vault in the center of the Lake Charles plant engulfed in flames. They must be saved. "I will give \$50,000 to the fire department that brings them out intact," the company president said.

But the roaring flames held the firefighters off. Soon more fire departments had to be called in as the situation became desperate. As the firemen arrived, the president shouted out that the offer was now \$100,000 to the fire department who could bring out the company's secret files.

From a distance, a lone siren was heard as another fire truck came into sight. It was the nearby Cajun Hackberry Rural Township Volunteer Fire Company, composed mainly of Cajuns over the age of 65. To everyone's amazement, that little run-down fire engine roared right past all the newer sleek engines that were parked outside the plant. Without even slowing down, it drove straight into the middle of the inferno.

Outside, the other firemen watched as the Hackberry old-timers jumped off right in the middle of the fire and fought it back on all sides. It was a performance and effort never seen before.

Within a short time, the Cajun old timers had extinguished the fire and had saved the secret formulas. The grateful chemical company president announced that for such a superhuman feat he was upping the reward to \$200,000, and walked over to personally thank each of the brave fire fighters.

The local KPLC TV news reporter rushed in to capture the event on film, asking the chief, "What are you going to do with all that money?"

"Whall," said Boudreaux, the 70-year-old fire chief, "Da furs ting we gonna do is fix dem damn brakes on dat fire-truck!"

North American Rotary Rig Counts

The U.S. rotary rig count was up 5 rigs to 1,576 for the week of March 31, 2006 and is 18.6 percent higher than last year.

The number of rotary rigs drilling for oil is down 6 at 253. The number of rigs targeting oil is 82 rigs higher than last year's level of activity. Rigs drilling currently for oil represent 16.1% percent of total drilling activity.

Rigs directed toward natural gas were up 7 at 1,321. The number of rigs currently drilling for gas is 164 greater than last year's level of 1,157.

Year-over-year oil exploration in the US is up 48.0 percent. Gas exploration is up 14.2 percent. The weekly average of crude oil spot prices is 20.0 percent higher than last year and natural gas spot prices are 0.5 percent higher.

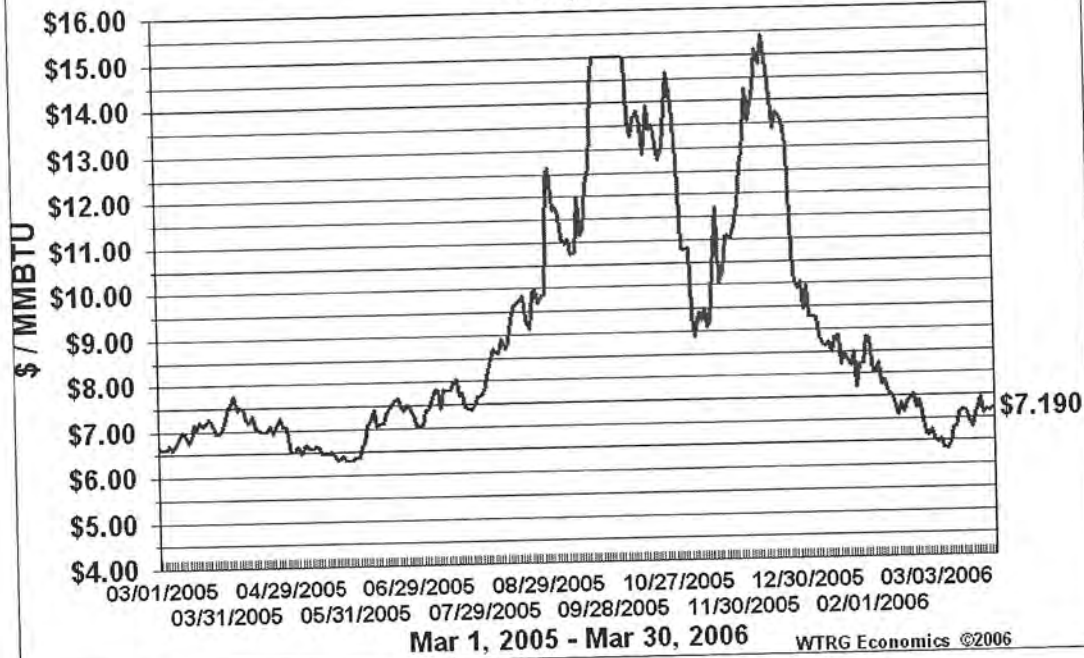
Canadian rig activity* was down 214 at 425 for the week of March 31, 2006 and is 195 rigs higher than last year's rig count. Canadian drilling falls rapidly in the spring to avoid environmental damage during the spring thaw and rainy season.

*The Canadian drilling industry experiences wide seasonal swings and even year over year comparisons can lead to incorrect conclusions.

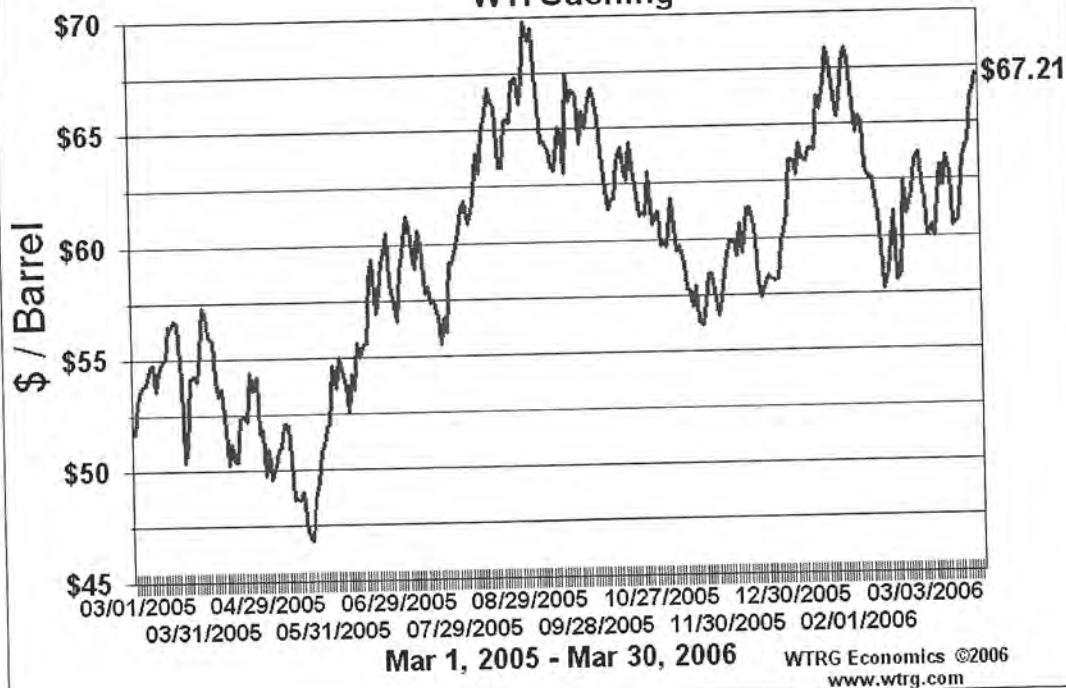
North American Rig Count

	03/31/06	03/24/06	04/01/05	Change		Percent Change	
				Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Total U.S.	1576	1571	1329	5	247	0.3%	18.6%
Offshore	91	87	94	4	-3	4.6%	-3.2%
Land	1485	1484	1235	1	250	0.1%	20.2%
Inland Waters	22	21	29	1	-7	4.8%	-24.1%
Oil	253	255	171	-2	82	-0.8%	48.0%
Percent	16.1%	16.2%	12.9%	-0.2%	3.2%		
Gas	1321	1314	1157	7	164	0.5%	14.2%
Percent	83.8%	83.8%	87.1%	0.2%	-3.2%		
Directional	363	363	345	0	18	0.0%	5.2%
Horizontal	257	250	164	7	93	2.8%	56.7%
Gulf of Mexico	86	82	90	4	-4	4.9%	-4.4%
Gulf Oil	4	5	6	-1	-2	-20.0%	-33.3%
Percent	4.7%	6.1%	6.7%	-1.4%	-2.0%		
Gulf Gas	82	77	84	5	-2	6.5%	-2.4%
Percent	95.3%	93.9%	93.3%	1.4%	2.0%		
Canada	425	639	230	-214	195	-33.5%	84.8%
North America	2001	2210	1559	-209	442	-9.5%	28.4%

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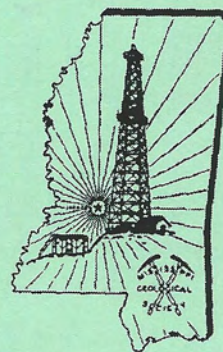
Volume 54

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May 2006

**MISSISSIPPI
GEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY
BULLETIN**

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~ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ~

Todd Hines

Dear Fellow Geologists:

This being my last letter, I want to thank the board members for all the help and service you have provided to the society during the past year. You have made my job much easier than I ever anticipated. With Bob Schneeflock taking the helm next year, I promise you the society will run like a well-oiled machine.

While mentioning Bob, I want to thank him for his excellent presentation at last month's luncheon meeting. Bob has given talks to the society the last two years, and he always puts on that he is "filling in" as a speaker. If I had to do a ranking of talks, his would be at the top of the list.

Over the past few months, the board has been discussing and researching a couple of changes that will be put into effect next year. First is a change of location for our monthly luncheon meetings to the River Hills Tennis Club. With fewer members having downtown offices, the board feels that this is a more centralized location. Also, adequate parking and facilities along with well-prepared food made River Hills an easy choice for the board. The second change is our monthly bulletin presentation. Next year, the plans are for our bulletins to be computer-generated and sent by e-mail. This will create a tremendous time and cost savings and will enable the material in the bulletin to be presented in color. Before September, the board will be working to get every member's e-mail address and personal information to update our directory. If there is anyone who doesn't have e-mail, bulletins will be printed and made available through regular mail.

Our last event of the year will be the Spring Fling on May 11th at the Jackson Yacht Club. Larry Baria will be making his precious gem collection available for our viewing while we enjoy a catfish dinner and plenty of cold beverages. The slate of officers for next year's board will also be announced at this time, so make plans to attend.

Thanks,

Todd Hines

The Mississippi Geological Society gratefully acknowledges the following contributors to the L. F. Boland Scholarship Fund:

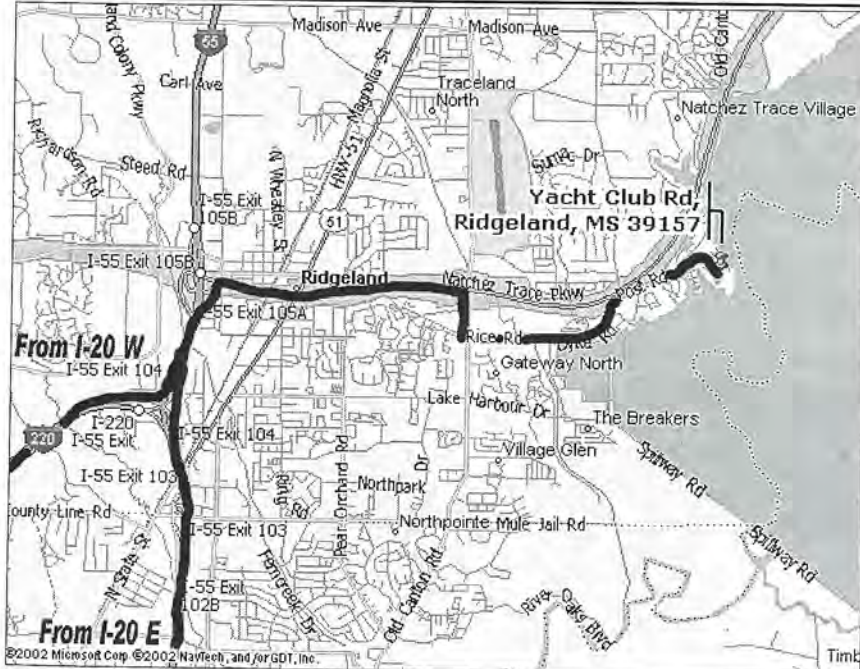
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AAPG House of Delegates Annual Meeting
"The Fleming Whale Dig"
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Oil & Gas Spot Market Graphs
MGS Membership Application
MGS Advertising Notice

MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 22,	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 11, 2005	'A Microbial Smackover Formation and the Dual Reservoir—Seal System at the Little Cedar Creek Field in Conecuh County of Alabama'	Capitol Club
November 8, 2005	'MDEM – The MS Digital Earth Model', Cragin Knox	Capitol Club
December 10, 2005	MAPL/MGS Christmas Party	Colonial Country Club
January 10, 2006	'The Barnett Shale Play of North Texas: Myths Exposed, Truths Revealed'	Capitol Club
February 14, 2006	'Global Stratigraphy and the Geology of MS', David Dockery	Capitol Club
March 14, 2006	'Geologic & Economic Review of Horizontal CBM Development, Southern West Virginia', Tim Lewis	Capitol Club
April 11, 2006	'Mississippi Sound - A view from the west side', Robert Schneeflock	Capitol Club
May 11, 2006	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club



OFFICERS MEETINGS

- September 6, 2005
- October 4, 2005
- November 1, 2005
- December 6, 2005
- January 3, 2006
- February 7, 2006
- March 7, 2006
- April 4, 2006
- May 2, 2006

Spring Fling

Jackson Yacht Club

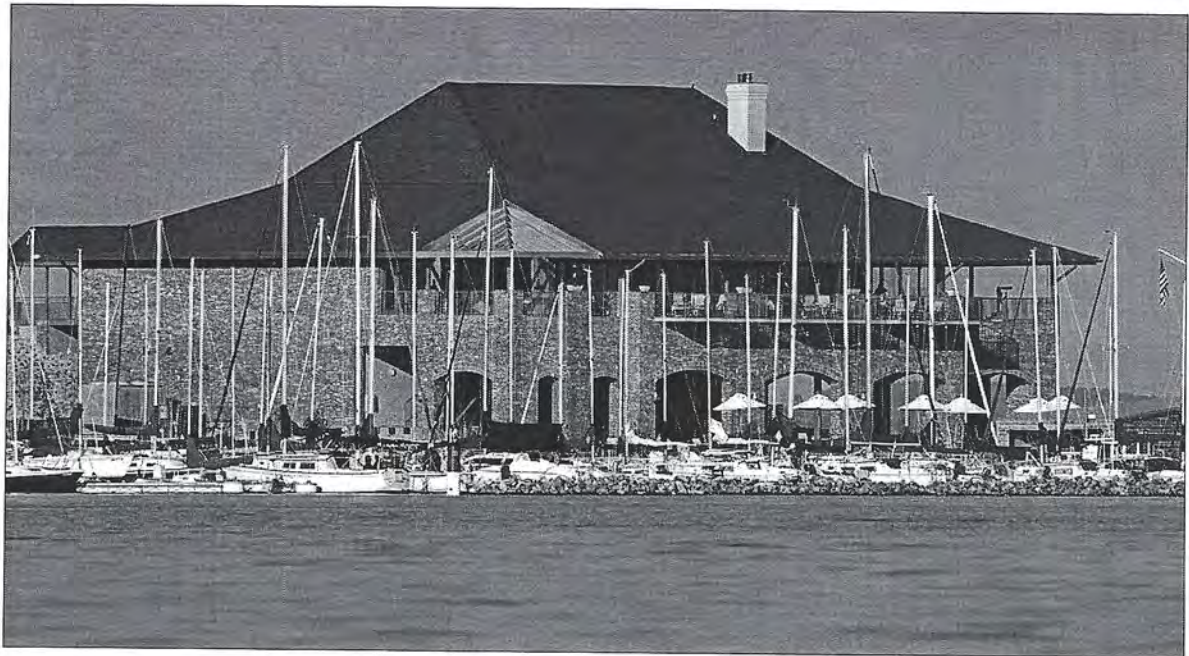
Thursday, May 11th 5:00 PM — 8:00 PM

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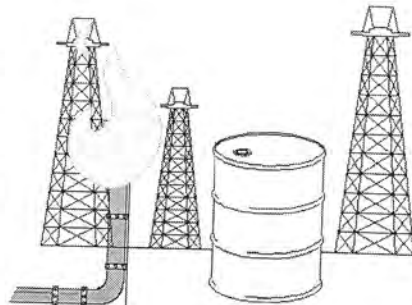
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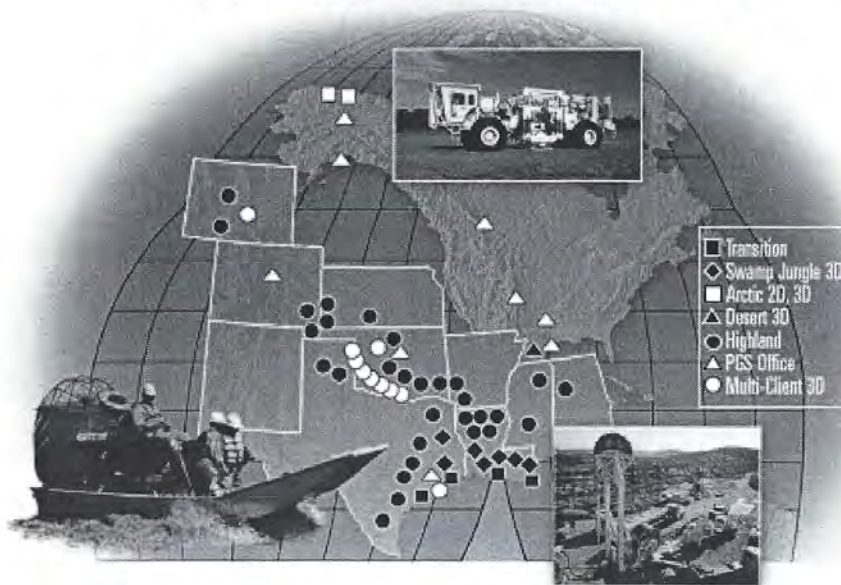
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Legislative News

Submitted by Rick Ericksen, Chair MGS Legislative Committee

Senate Bill 2913 - Registered Professional Geologists Practice Act

The Mississippi State Board of Registered Professional Geologists (MSBRPG) introduced two companion bills (Senate Bill 2913, and House Bill 1369) to reauthorize its enabling legislation during the 2006 Legislative Session of the Mississippi State Legislature. This legislation was introduced a year earlier to repeal the sunset date, revise registration fees and make technical corrections.

The bill (SB 2913) went into conference and the result of the conference committee was to remove the repealer and accept the removal of language concerning the environment that was previously recommended to be struck by the MSBRPG. The resulting bill went to the House and Senate floors for a vote on March 28, 2006, and it was successfully passed in both Houses.

The conference report, in addition to removing a three (3) year repealer added by a House committee, also included an amendment to remove the repealer from the existing Mississippi engineering and surveying law. This was done as a result of it being first proposed by Chairman Robert Dearing and agreed to by the MSBRPG. Through this agreement the MSBRPG has again demonstrated its commitment to work with the engineering community in general, the Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors (BLPES), and the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC).

The legislation was approved by Governor Haley Barbour on April 24, 2006 and will take effect on July 1, 2006. The text of the adopted legislation appears on the Mississippi Legislative web site at: www.ls.state.ms.us

AAPG House of Delegates Annual Meeting, April 9, 2006

Submitted by Rick Ericksen, MGS Delegate to the AAPG

The House of Delegates (HOD) approved a proposed amendment to the AAPG's Constitution during its annual meeting held on April 9, 2006 in Houston, TX. The amendment along with the supporting Bylaws changes were passed by a vote of 175 to 5 with 1 abstention. The HODs action follows similar support by the leadership of the HOD and the AAPG's Advisory Council, who both unanimously supported the proposed changes, and the support of the AAPG's Executive Committee (approved by a 6 to 1 vote).

The proposed Constitutional amendment increase the number of elected AAPG officers from six to seven.

The amendment and supporting Bylaw changes create a new Vice-president (Regions) and changes the title of the existing Vice-president to Vice-president (Sections). The primary benefits of this proposed change are: 1) Anticipated improved service from AAPG headquarters to all members (Sections and Regions); and 2) Representation of international members among the elected officers on the AAPG's Executive Committee (AAPG's membership is currently 30% international).

With that said, I recommend that if you are a member of the AAPG please vote in affirmation of this needed change – you should have already received a request to vote electronically and will also shortly be receiving a paper ballot to vote by mail if you so choose.

The Fleming Whale Dig

James E. Starnes, Miss. Office of Geology
Dr. Charles Ciampaglio, Wright State University
George Phillips, Miss. Museum of Natural Science
Matt Forrir, Museum of the Ozarks

In December of 2005, the partial remains of a large archaeocete whale, *Cynthiacetes* (previously *Pontogenus*), was excavated from the Late Eocene, Pachuta Marl from the Denny Fleming Farm in Eastern Clarke County, Mississippi. The Fleming Farm specimen of *Cynthiacetes* is one of only three known specimens of this recently described new species. The dig was an educational field study for geology students at Wright State University in Ohio, working in cooperation with researchers from the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, the Mississippi Office of Geology, and the Museum of the Ozarks in Springfield, Missouri.

The specimen was originally donated to the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science upon its discovery in the early 1980's. However, plans to fully excavate the specimen didn't take shape until December of 2004 during an annual paleontological collecting trip in Yazoo County, Mississippi when an agreement was reached among the researchers to turn the dig into a teaching tool.

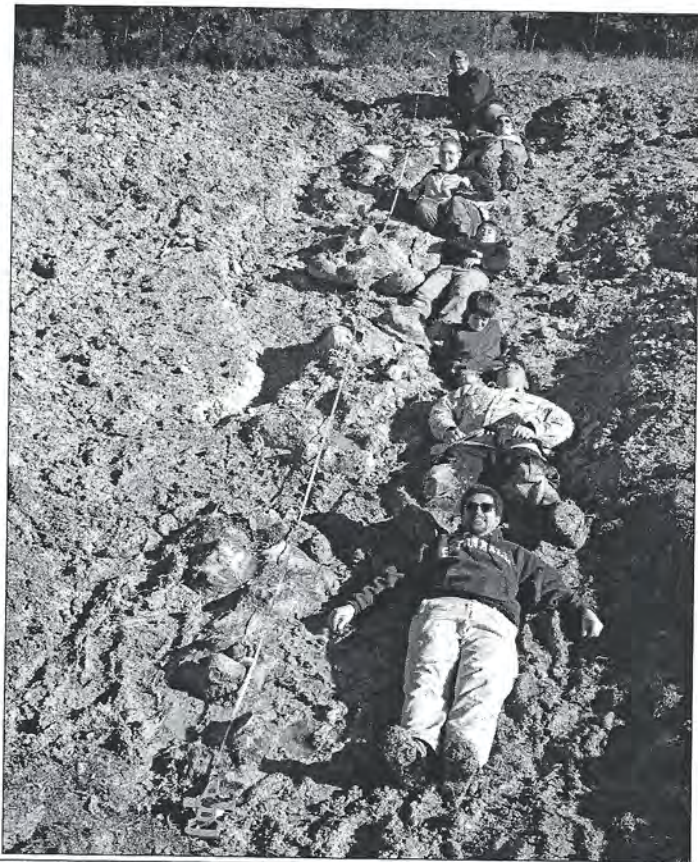
In three short days the students and researchers worked tirelessly to uncover 42.5 feet of jumbled, giant, fossilized bones (mostly large vertebrae) as well as a wealth of other fossil fauna. The remains were then removed in six large blocks of limestone and loaded onto a flat-bed trailer.

Though the specimen belongs to the State of Mississippi, it will be prepared and housed (on-loan) at the Museum of the Ozarks where work on skull material from another important large Mississippi archaeocete, the Clearview basilosaur, is being done.



Large fossil whale bones emerge from the floor of the excavation.

Students sit end to end (for scale) in the excavation along the right side of the exposed column of vertebrae.



With the aid of heavy farm equipment, large blocks containing numerous bones are removed from the excavation on their way to be loaded onto a burlap-padded trailer for transport.

Ethanol Fuel from Corn Faulted as 'Unsustainable Subsidized Food Burning'

At a time when ethanol-gasoline mixtures (gasohol) are touted as the American answer to fossil fuel shortages by corn producers, food processors and some lawmakers, Cornell's David Pimentel, Cornell professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and one of the world's leading experts in issues relating to energy and agriculture, takes a longer range view.

Adding up the energy costs of corn production and its conversion into ethanol, 131,000 BTUs are needed to make one gallon of ethanol. One gallon of ethanol has an energy value of only 77,000 BTUs. Thus, 70 percent more energy is required to produce ethanol than the energy that actually is in it. Every time you make one gallon of ethanol, there is a net energy loss of 54,000 BTUs.

Neither increases in government subsidies to corn-based ethanol fuel nor hikes in the price of petroleum can overcome what David Pimentel calls a fundamental input-yield problem: It takes more energy to make ethanol from grain than the combustion of ethanol produces.

Mr. Pimentel concluded that "abusing our precious croplands to grow corn for an energy-inefficient process that yields low-grade automobile fuels amounts to unsustainable subsidized food burning".

Pimentel, who chaired a U.S. Department of Energy panel that investigated the energetics, economics and environmental aspects of ethanol production several years ago, subsequently conducted a detailed analysis of the corn-to-car fuel process. His findings are published in the September, 2001 issue of the Encyclopedia of Physical Sciences and Technology.

Among his findings are:

An acre of U.S. corn yields about 7,110 pounds of corn for processing into 328 gallons of ethanol. But planting, growing and harvesting that much corn requires about 140 gallons of fossil fuels and costs \$347 per acre, according to Pimentel's analysis. Thus, even before corn is converted to ethanol, the feedstock costs \$1.05 per gallon of ethanol.

The energy economics get worse at the processing plants, where the grain is crushed and fermented. As many as three distillation steps are needed to separate the 8 percent ethanol from the 92 percent water. Additional treatment and energy are required to produce the 99.8 percent pure ethanol for mixing with gasoline.

Ethanol from corn costs about \$1.74 per gallon to produce, compared with about 95 cents to produce a gallon of gasoline. "That helps explain why fossil fuels-not ethanol-are used to produce ethanol", Pimentel says. "The growers and processors can't afford to burn ethanol to make ethanol. U.S. drivers couldn't afford it, either, if it weren't for government subsidies to artificially lower the price".

Most economic analyses of corn-to-ethanol production overlook the costs of environmental damages, which Pimentel says should add another 23 cents per gallon. "Corn production in the U.S. erodes soil about 12 times faster than the soil can be reformed, and irrigating corn mines groundwater 25 percent faster than the natural recharge rate of ground water. The environmental system in which corn is being produced is being rapidly degraded. Corn should not be considered a renewable resource for ethanol energy production, especially when human food is being converted into ethanol".

The approximately \$1 billion a year in current federal and state subsidies (mainly to large corporations) for ethanol production are not the only costs to consumers, the Cornell scientist observes. Subsidized corn results in higher prices for meat, milk and eggs because about 70 percent of corn grain is fed to livestock and poultry in the United States. Increasing ethanol production would further inflate corn prices, Pimentel says, noting: "In addition to paying tax dollars for ethanol subsidies, consumers would be paying significantly higher food prices in the marketplace".

Nickels and dimes aside, some drivers still would rather see their cars fueled by farms in the Midwest than by oil wells in the Middle East, Pimentel acknowledges, so he calculated the amount of corn needed to power an automobile:

The average U.S. automobile, traveling 10,000 miles a year on pure ethanol (not a gasoline-ethanol mix) would need about 852 gallons of the corn-based fuel. This would take 11 acres to grow, based on net ethanol production. This is the same amount of cropland required to feed seven Americans.

If all the automobiles in the United States were fueled with 100 percent ethanol, a total of about 97 percent of U.S. land area would be needed to grow the corn feedstock. Corn would cover nearly the total land area of the United States.

Boudreaux and the Texan

One day, Boudreaux was sitting on his porch when a truck drove up to Boudreaux's house and a man stepped out. The man introduced himself to Boudreaux, told Boudreaux that he was from Texas, and that he was getting some information about land in the area.

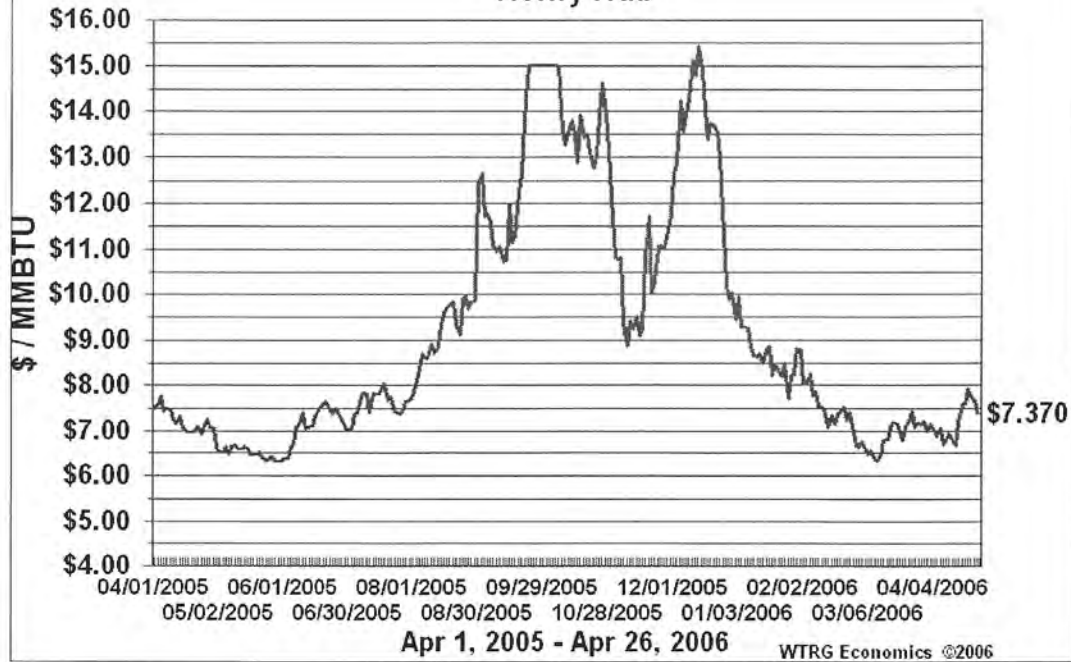
The Texan said, "Mr. Boudreaux, how much land do you have here where you live?"

Boudreaux said, "Mais, I have about two acres."

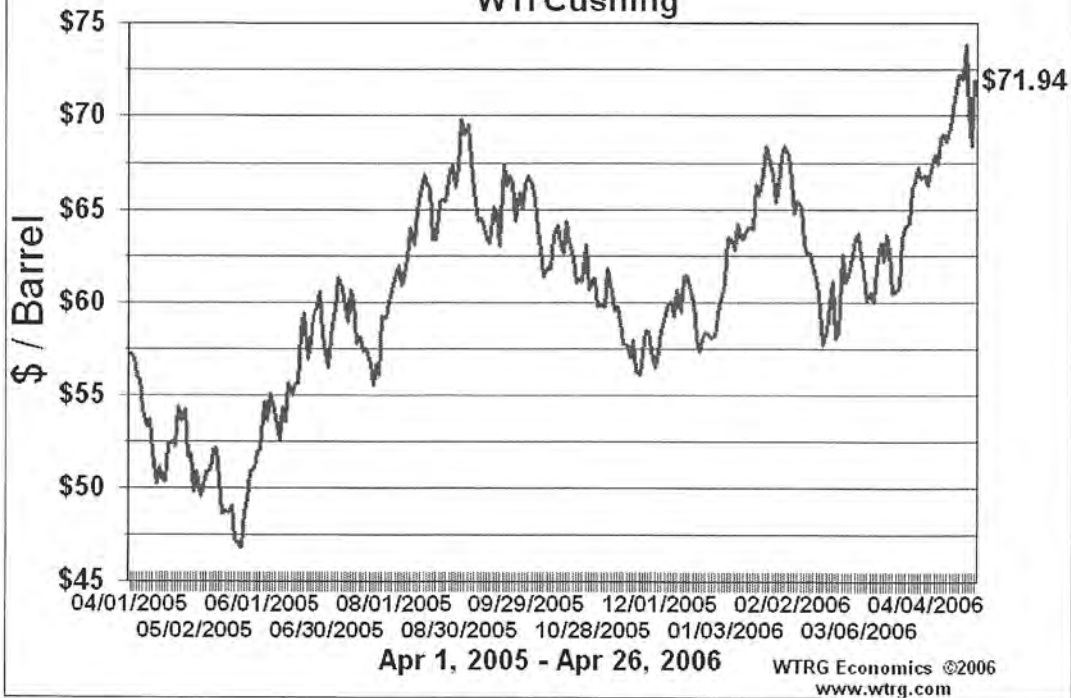
The Texan said, "That's not much land. Back in Texas where I'm from, it takes me just about all day to drive my truck down my driveway to my house."

Boudreaux thinks about what the Texan said for a while and then responds, "Yeah, I used to have a truck like dat."

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