

# **New Orleans Chapter Newsletter**

Society of Independent Professional Earth Scientists
Volume 13, Number 1 January 2012

# January Featured Speaker Paul Lawless The Bakkan Resource Play

# **Ed Barry**

Ed Barry passed away on New Years Day. For twenty-four years Ed served our SIPES Chapter by diligently calling each of us as a reminder of the monthly luncheons. His sertvice went well-beyond just the monthly greeting. Many of us received Christmas cards, birthday cards and Father's Day cards from Ed. Our wives sometimes received Mother's Day cards.

Truly, Ed was a Santa Claus to his family, his neighbiors and friends. Beginning in January each year he would begin buying gifts for next Christmas, twelve months away. He was always thinking of others. So it was especially poignant that just after this 2011 Christmas I was notified by his daughter, Kathy Grieshaber, that Ed had passed away.

Ed served his country in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1942 to 1946. He was later employed by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries for 36 years. He was an avid Notre Dame football fan and collector of old movies.

I will miss his phone call each month, reminding me of the upcoming SIPES luncheon and hearing his voice say, "How ya doing young fella?"

Eric Broadbridge

# The Bakkan Resource Play Overview

By: Paul Lawless

While drilling for traditional oil and gas traps, several elements of the modern resource plays have been encountered and some plays even developed as economic discoveries along the way. The first resource play element discovered was the ability to produce from fractured rock over anticlines such as the Niobrara and Steele Shales over the Salt Creek Anticline and Teapot Dome in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming (1920's) and the Bakken Shale over the Nesson Anticline in the Williston Basin of North Dakota (1950's) are early development examples highly fractured reservoirs which had enough permeability to be developed with vertical well technology.

The second, and ultimately the most important element of the modern resource play was the discovery of actively generating hydrocarbon source rocks. These actively generating source rocks are slightly over pressured as are the surrounding carrier

beds that are part of the petroleum system that over geologic time is actively transporting the hydrocarbons to a lower pressure regime which generally is updip and to the edge of the basin. While considered a drilling hazard when exploring for deeper conventional plays, tests in or near an actively generating source rocks have been made often as a spur of the moment attempt at a secondary completion when the initial exploratory idea did not work. This was done where the vertical well flowed unpredictably and excessively during drilling as it intersected a charged fracture having enough porosity and permeability to generate a potentially economic test rates. Invariably, these completion attempts which often only intersected one or two natural fractures in a subtle flexure trend and were not commercial.

The advent of horizontal drilling combined with simple early hydraulic frac technology gave life to these fractured subtle flexure trends. Horizontal wells could now intersect more natural fractures with one well and hydraulic fracturing could break its

#### Resource continued

way into others. Discoveries like the Niobrara Formation at Silo Field in the DJ Basin of Wyoming in the 1980's and 1990's and the Austin Chalk Trend in South-Central Louisiana in the 1990's are examples of this development. I'm sure it was hoped that the new technology application would allow larger volumes to be produced from each well, but because of flat to declining oil and natural gas prices in the late 1980's through 2000, the plays were generally uneconomic.

With continued advancements in hydraulic fracture technology combined with the higher commodity prices from 2000 to 2008, it has become possible to fracture stimulate, or rubblize, parts of the pressurized petroleum system where few naturally occurring fractures exist has driven the basin centered drilling boom with thousands of horizontal wells. The fractures are also being propped open with much higher crush strength ceramic beads in order to withstand the high drawdown pressures inherent to such tight reservoirs. Ultimately, the profitability of individual wells relies upon attractive commodity pricing during the first year of production. Unlike past traditional reservoirs, a resource play well can never be accelerated to make up for lost cash flow during times of lower commodity prices. Instead, the development and economics of a resource play needs to be seen in the context of dollar cost averaging into a market over multiple economic business cycles.

#### **Paul Lawless**



Paul Lawless received a BS (1986) and a MS in Geology (1989) from Louisiana State University and has been employed as a geologist in the petroleum industry in New Orleans since 1990. He has worked for Texaco, Shell Offshore, CNG/Dominion, and now Helis. The first fifteen years of his career centered on active generation of prospects in South Louisiana and in the Deepwater Gulf of Mexico Basin. Since coming to Helis, his duties shifted initially to operations, reservoir geology, and prospect-portfolio analysis primarily for Gulf of Mexico assets. Over the last three years his duties have shifted to coordination of Helis' Rocky Mountain area resource plays. Paul has authored or coauthored 12 papers concerning Tertiary Stratigraphy of the northern Gulf of Mexico Coast in the GCAGS, GCSSEPM, NOGS, and PTTC. He won the Best Poster Session and Third Best Paper at the 1997 GCAGS. He is a member of NOGS, AAPG, SGS, WGS, and SEG.

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# NEW ORLEANS CHAPTER SPRING 2012 SEMI-ANNUAL DUES

Spring 2012 Semi-Annual Dues	\$110.00
(Payable upon receipt of this invoice—delinquent March 1, 2012)	
(Delinquent Fee, after March 1, 2012)	\$20.00
Advertisers ½ year business card in newsletter	\$25.00
Company Ads: ¼ page @ \$100, ½ page @ \$250, or full page @ \$400	
( Please submit a business card or ad with your payment.)	
Remembrance Fund	\$25.00
General Fund	\$25.00
Philanthropic Fund	\$25.00
Total Payment:	\$

If you are paying by a company check, please print the member's name on the check!

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## **Treasurer's Report:**

As of December 15, 2011, the following financial transactions occurred during the prior quarter:

#### **Cash Account:**

Beginning Balance: \$ 26,821.51

In Flows:

Dues and Donations \$ 7,475.00

Total InFlow: \$ 7,475.00

Out Flows:

Andrea's (3) \$ 2,823.50

Total OutFlow: \$ (2,823.50)

Difference: \$ (4,671.50)

Ending Fidelity Account Balance as of 12-15-2010: \$ 31,473.01

Memo only (included in balance above):

Remembrance: \$2,518.32 Philanthropic: \$1,600.00

#### **Investment Account:**

Vanguard Money Market Account as of 9-30-2011: \$ 15,652.74

TOTAL \$ 47,125.75

Reese Pinney: Treasurer

# January Luncheon Meeting - Paul Lawless Speaker Tuesday January 17th 2012

11:30 a.m. Social and Drinks, 12:00 p.m. Seating
Andrea's Restaurant
Metairie, Louisiana

Reservations: Carol St. Germain 504-267-3466