



**Mike Merritt,
GEM Consulting**

Towards a Public Policy Geoscience

Chairman's Column

This month our talk steps outside the usual oil and gas-related talks. Each one of us has been affected by the failures of the coastal protection levee systems in New Orleans and adjacent southeast Louisiana. As geoscientists, public policy should be of somewhere on our radar. Mike Merritt has a strong background in dealing with policy makers, engineers and contractors. I hope that you take the time to come out and meet Mike and learn something about the intricacies of this coastal flood protection system and the people who make headlines on a weekly basis.

At our first meeting for the current year, 36 members and guests heard an informative and "eye opening" talk by Art Johnson, our chapter secretary. Art had recently delivered this presentation at the Deepwater Symposium here in New Orleans, pointing out the effects of supply, demand and logistics on various energy sources. One startling statistic is that natural gas, struggling to stay above \$3/MCF domestically sells for \$18/MCF in some other countries. A point that most of us recognize is that the various alternative en-

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Tuesday, October 23rd Andrea's Restaurant - Metairie

Social 11:30 AM with seating for dinner at 12:00 PM



Abstract

Natural hazards are a way of life in south Louisiana including flooding rains, soil subsidence and tropical storm surges.

In addition, there are dynamic geo-hazards such as local physical geology or stratigraphic limitations affecting designs of public works and regional or global factors such as relentlessly rising sea-level and tectonic adjustments. These geological facts of life affect long term planning to manage adaptations to these changing conditions. How well public works projects are designed and constructed deter-

mines how effectively billions of dollars will be spent maintaining our infrastructure and defending our communities.

Well designed, properly built, engineering structures must be able to accommodate geo-hazards in the near time scales by including a basic understanding of how the projects fit into the larger-scale earth systems. Integrating geoscience into the analysis, planning and application of engineering methods or using earth science to guide urban planning is evermore imperative. The speaker, a geologist with physics and MBA degrees, has an extensive background in technical project management and works with policy makers, planners, engineers, city, parish, state and federal government officials and agencies or private sector companies or contractors.

Abstract:

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One only has to look at Harold N. Fisk and his work with the Mississippi River Commission for a prime example of the benefits of having geoscience guidance for a large-scale planning effort. Public policy officials, both elected and appointed need our profession's experience and knowledge. Louisiana is leading the nation by going one step further and moving experts from advising public policy to making public policy directly (by appointing experts to regional flood authorities as a post-Katrina/Rita reform). ■

Mike Merritt Bio

Mike Merritt is a geologist and owner of GEM Consulting LTD. He is uniquely experienced because he has been involved with a wide variety of scientific projects. For Sun Oil, he was a development geologist in some of the most well-known oil fields in Louisiana and the southeast. For Conoco, he worked on exploration projects in the world's most severely constrained deep basin. In Africa, he was principal geologist in a production optimization project in the 50 square mile, 364,000 BOPD Hassi Messaoud Field where he used expertise in using computers to draw geologic maps. In public service for the State of Oklahoma, Merritt served in a variety of roles utilizing expertise in petroleum geology as a member of work groups receiving a Governor's commendation for special projects or national recognition for implementing federally-mandated environmental protection programs. He made a home in Baton Rouge in 2004, joined NOGS in 2005 and was appointed

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as a Founding Commissioner of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-West by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco and re-appointed by Governor Jindal. ■

Lemarie', continued from page 1
ergy sources are not even close to meeting the needs of this country or the world.

Next month, on November 15, the annual joint Societies luncheon will be held at the Roosevelt Hotel. This event is part of our regular meeting schedule (included in your dues) and Carol will call as usual for a "head count". A keynote speaker will be named in next month's newsletter.

Kevin McVey, who attended the September meeting and is already a SIPES national member, will become affiliated with our local chapter. We welcome him and look forward to seeing him at future meetings.

Not unexpectedly, Reese reports that dues are somewhat slow coming in; check your records!

Finally, our chapter has agreed to be a co-sponsor with NOGS for the annual Christmas party to be held on December 7 at Chateau Estates Golf & Country Club. Mark your calendars.

The management of your New Orleans Chapter is in need of new blood. It used to be that incoming members stepped forward to help run the organization. We're looking for some of you who have

Louis E. Lemarié
Chairman



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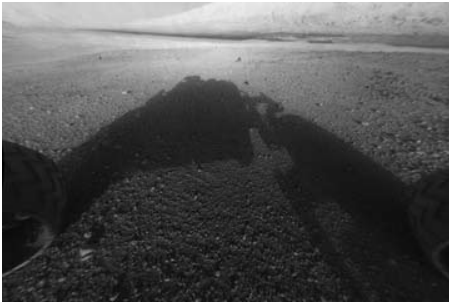
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NASA's Curiosity at Gale Crater

NASA's Mars rover Curiosity has identified a type of rock scientists have never seen on Mars before, but it's one familiar to geologists on Earth.

The Martian rock, a form of basalt, has a composition very similar to volcanic rocks found in ocean-island settings such as Hawaii and the Azores, as well as in rift zones.

The rock, named Jake Matijevic for a key member of the rover engineering team who passed away shortly after Curiosity arrived on the red planet, can form in a number of ways, says Edward Stolper, provost of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and a member of Curiosity's science team.

On Earth, this kind of rock forms as magma cools and crystallizes under relatively high pressure and with relatively high concentrations of water dissolved in the magma.

The release, during volcanic eruptions, of water dissolved in magma is one pathway for water vapor – a greenhouse gas – to enrich and warm a planet's atmosphere. Indeed, Curiosity's mission aims to see if Gale Crater ever could have hosted microbial life – a prospect that would have required the presence of liquid water in the crater.

On Mars, the process that formed "Jake" is unclear.

"We have one rock," Dr. Stolper said at a briefing Thursday. Sitting on the floor of Gale Crater, where fine soils and layered, sedimentary rocks seem to be the norm, Jake appears to be an interloper, removed from its original geologic setting.

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2012 Luncheon Meetings

September 18

October 16

November 15 Joint API

December 18

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