



NOC Newsletter

Volume 9, Number 5

May 2009



ARE WE ALONE? THE HISTORY OF UFOs: WITH ASTRONOMER MIKE SANDRAS

JOIN US AT OUR MAY DINNER

TUESDAY, MAY 19TH, 2009

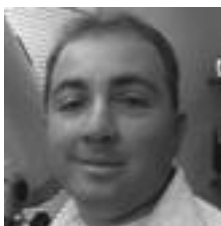
6:30 PM - COCKTAILS AND SOCIAL

7:30 PM - SEATING FOR DINNER

ANDREA'S RESTAURANT

3100 19TH ST., METAIRIE

May Speaker: Mike Sandras



Michael Sandras has worked in the astronomy related field for most of his adult life. He starting work at Ep Roberts Instruments in the 1980s. He was the manager of the Kenner Planetarium for 17 years and worked at the University of New Orleans observatory as an instructor for 16 years. Currently he serves as Manager of the Gretna Observatory.

Currently he is one of NASA/JPL's Solar System Ambassadors to the state of Louisiana. In this capacity, Sandras continues to give presentations to civic organizations in the southeastern United States. Sandras is currently President of the Pontchartrain Astronomy Society and State Director of the Louisiana Mutual UFO Network. He is also a member of the American Astronomical Society, Astronomy Society of the Pacific, Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, International Dark Sky Association, International Planetarium Society, Southwestern Association of Planetariums and Southeastern Planetarium Association (SEPA). While with SEPA, he served as president for two years and on the board of directors for four years.

Sandras has an avid interest in many aspects of astronomy and frequently gives presentations on the subject. His interest in UFO's grew out of his astronomical experiences.

Asteroid 18434, Mikesandras, discovered by **David Levy** and **Carolyn Shoemaker** is named in his honor for his work in the planetarium field.

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eltonfan@bfg.nocoxmail.com

BEACON EXPLORATION

Al Baker, Jr., Senior Explorationist
Abaker1006@aol.com

Hank E. Ecroyd, Senior Explorationist
hecroyd@aol.com

3636 N. Causeway Blvd., Suite 210
Metairie, LA 70002

Office: 504-836-2710
Fax: 504-836-2709

JACK THORSON PETROLEUM GEOLOGIST

Northcoast Oil Company
610 East Rutland St
Covington, LA 70433-3221

Phone 985-898-3577
Fax 985-898-3585

jack@northcoastoil.com

COVINGTON EXPLORATION COMPANY, L.L.C.

DOUG CRISTINA
GEOLOGIST

COVINGTONEXPL@BELLSOUTH.NET

324 COURTHOUSE ALLEY
COVINGTON, LOUISIANA
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985-875-1283

BOB DOUGLASS EXPLORATION CO.

M.R. (Bob) Douglass
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P.O. Box 1059
Destrahan, LA 70047

bobdouglass@cox.net
985-764-7463
Fax 985-764-0955

LaBay Exploration, L.L.C.

Walton D. "Bubba" Sanchez
Kenneth J. Huffman
L.R. "Lee" Prout
W.S. "Bill" Peirce

111 Veterans Blvd. Suite 1550
Metairie, Louisiana 70005

Office: 504-371-5967
Fax: 504-371-5969

www.labayexploration.com

Roy Walther Petroleum Geologist

2421 Prancer Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70131

504-392-8513 phone/fax
504-392-9332

JURASIN OIL & GAS, INC.

9700 Richmond Ave., Suite 124
Houston, Texas 77042-4821
Phone 832 242 6000
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Cell 504 931 7506

John M. Jurasin President

Cert. Pet. Geologist #4284
Cert. Prof. Earth Scientist #1961
johnjurason@jurasinoilgas.com



GILBERT ST. GERMAIN

Our deepest condolences are extended to Carol St. Germain, our SIPES Administrative Secretary. On April 9th her husband, Gilbert, was taken from us. Gilbert was a retired Fire Operator and 33 year Veteran of the New Orleans Fire Department. He was a longtime resident of New Orleans and a graduate from Warren Easton High School. Just as he served through the Fire Department, Gilbert was an unseen member of the SIPES New Orleans Chapter. He was part of the team that got your Newsletter out on time. SIPES members wishing to memorialize Gilbert can arrange for Masses at any Catholic parish or through a donation in Gilbert's memory to the St. Joseph Hospice located at 824 Elmwood Park Blvd., Suite 155, New Orleans, LA, 70123.

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(3200 Ridgelake Drive - Ste 207
Metairie, LA 70002)

CONTACTS

Administrative Secretary
Carol St. Germain
504-267-3466,
cstg6755@aol.com

Reservations, Ed Barry
504-835-2508

Chairman, Louis Lemarie'
504-393-8659, jlmarie@cox.net

Vice-Chairman, Michael Fein
504-885-0004
mikfe@wtffshore.net

Treasurer, Reese Pinney
504-566-9802 X-121
rbpinney@bellsouth.net

Secretary,
Historical & Remembrances
Al Baker 504-836-2710
abaker1006@aol.com

Membership, Tony Carollo
504-885-0004
tcarollo@bellsouth.net

Website, Dave Broadbridge
david@kimsuol.com

Newsletter, Tom Klekamp
985-845-4046
klekamp@bellsouth.net

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ZOT OIL & GAS, INC

Jim Zotkiewicz, Geologist
Jimzot38@zotoil.com

3200 Ridgelake Drive
Metairie, LA 70002

504-831-4694
Fax: 504-831-46981

Paul C. Perrett **Geologist** **Oil and Gas Consultant**

650 Poydras Street
Suite 2247
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

504-581-7335
Fax 504-558-0330

The Chairman's Column

At the April meeting, Steve Rosenberg with Weatherford, gave a very comprehensive presentation on drilling with casing. The process seems to be very project specific and may not be applicable to what many of us would be involved with, but it is always interesting to keep up with advances in technology related to our industry.

This month is our annual May dinner meeting and Mike Fein has lined up Mike Sandras, a local astronomer to talk about "UFO History". It should be both interesting and entertaining. Mike Fein has also arranged with Andrea's for a gourmet meal with a choice of three entrées along with soup, salad and dessert. Speaking of this event, we need some contributions

to the "Wine Fund," so if you can spare a little something, let me or Reese Pinney know.

I just returned from the 2009 SIPES Convention at the "Inn at Harbour Town" on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. The Island is an extraordinary spot and there didn't seem to be any evidence of the economic downturn there. Total registration was about 120, with 80 members and 40 spouses.

Other Chapter news is that after a heated campaign, your current officers were re-elected for another year.

Since this will be our last meeting for this year, we wish everyone a safe, enjoyable and prosperous summer. One theme at the convention was to try and grow

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SIPES, so we urge you to recruit eligible new members whenever possible.

"Until September"

Louis E. Lemarié



Westbank Optimist Club Observatory - Open Wednesdays Dusk until 9:00 p.m.

Free Admission - Educational and Fun for All Ages! Excellent for School groups and Scout Troops!

The Gretna Observatory is the largest public observatory in the Greater New Orleans area. It was built to promote a greater interest in astronomy. It was especially designed to be an educational benefit to school age children and young adults from local schools by creating an awareness and interest in astronomy, science, and technology. The Observatory first opened its doors to the public in late October of 2004.

The Gretna Observatory is located at #1 Copernicus Lane behind Gretna Jr. High on Gretna Blvd. between Lafayette St. and Manhattan Blvd. Copernicus Lane also continues across Gretna Blvd. turning into Huey P. Long Ave. It is open to the general public with free admission and parking every Monday and Wednesday evening at dusk except for major holidays and as always weather permitting. Partly cloudy evenings will be determinable by the observatory operator if sky conditions will allow any or limited observing. Visitors may phone ahead at 504-227-7624 to check current sky status and inquire what objects are available for observing.

The observatory offers viewing through a pier-mounted GPS/Go-To computer controlled 16-inch Meade LX-200GPS f/10 Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope or SCT. It is housed under a 16 foot dome. Typical astronomical objects of interest pending on availability in the night sky include our Moon, the planets Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, various nebulae, double stars, star clusters, constellations, etc. Other associated optical equipment include a piggybacked Stellarvue 80mm refractor telescope, Orion 7x50 binoculars, a plain or "white" light solar filter for safely observing the sun through the Meade 16" SCT as well as a Coronado Solar Max 60T hydrogen-alpha telescope for viewing the Sun in it's natural "hydrogen-alpha" waves yielding more of the sun's features with greater detail.

School groups and Scout groups as well as any other organizational groups with an interest in using the facility are welcomed and encouraged to schedule special observing sessions and star parties.

Contact Observatory Manager Mike Sandras at: astrox@ix.net to schedule events and for any other information about the Gretna Observatory.



Astronomer Mike Sandras teaches a school class

SOCIETY OF INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL
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P.O. BOX 50088
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