Imperial Barrel Award Competition, GCAGS Report
by GCAGS President, Ken Nemeth

The local geological societies in the Gulf Coast Region, including this one, are affiliated societies of the Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies (GCAGS), which doubles as the Gulf Coast Section of AAPG. You may have read in recent issues of the AAPG Explorer about the Imperial Barrel Award, named after Imperial College, London, where the concept originated. This is a competition, open not only to all AAPG Student Chapters, but any interested university with a geology/geophysics department.

The premise is that each participating team (limited to one from each university) consists of up to five students, a faculty advisor, and an industry advisor/mentor. The team members should be master degree candidates or PhD candidates with less than two years of post graduate work. Undergraduates can participate, but may be at a disadvantage to do so. Team members are eligible to participate only one time and compete for cash prizes for their departments, $20,000 at the global level.

This is the first year that AAPG has undertaken to have the contest take place at the section/region level. Originally 46 teams (globally) signed up to participate in the contest. However, because of the late start (November) and early deadline (March 15) to complete the contest, many more universities who considered participating could not. It should be recognized that this contest is not a minor task – an enormous amount of time and effort was needed to complete the project, with team members devoting extra hours and weekends for their interpretation and research. During the course of our section contest, one team had to drop out when most of its team members could not continue because of course and personal demands.

The first round of competition is at the Section and International Region level. GCAGS administered and was the primary sponsor for our section contest. The competition was hosted in Houston by GCAGS and organized by Ken Nemeth, this year's GCAGS President. Schlumberger Information Solutions and Schlumberger's Breakthrough Team Performance Center provided venues in their training center with really "state-of-the-art" presentation facilities for judging and final practices. They also assisted with lodging and meals. Cash awards made to the participating teams were subsidized by donations from the New Orleans, Lafayette, Shreveport, East Texas, Houston and Gulf Coast Geological Societies.

Data were sent to the teams in mid-January and came from part of the Norwegian North Sea or from Australia (two different data sets were utilized). The teams interpreted the data on systems available to the university. If they did not have software, sponsoring companies made software available to them (Landmark, Kingdom, Petrel, GeoFrame, etc.). They received a huge quantity of information that needed to be analyzed; well logs, two-D and three-D seismic data, core information, and geochemical data from an area of the world where oil and gas are produced. Additionally, students were permitted to use other resources to enhance their presentations such as literature researches, Google Earth, etc. The instructions were for the students to work as a team exactly as an Asset Team would for a major oil company would. They were required to analyze the data and make recommendations with justifications - "drill here", or "shoot more seismic there", or "don't invest further in this area", and so on. The teams were required to make a presentation to judges from the oil industry, each team member giving about five minutes of the presentation.

By last week, the surviving teams were University of Louisiana, Lafayette; University of Houston; and Stephen F. Austin State University. The UL team took first place and will represent the GCAGS at the Global Finals to be held in San Antonio in April, at the AAPG Annual Convention. There they will

compete against the winning teams from the other sections of AAPG, the International Regions, Imperial College (the founder of the contest), and last year's winner, the University of Aberdeen. The UL team consists of John Rosen (team leader), Fleur Bases, Derek Hargrave and John Salsbury, and Academic Advisor, Dr. Brian Lock. AAPG will cover transportation, lodging, and registration for all teams and one faculty advisor participating in the global finals in San Antonio. The top three teams will receive cash awards that will be presented to their departments.

The organizers and sponsors of the contest should be thanked for putting together the arrangements at such short notice, and the teams should all be congratulated for their hard work and professional presentations.

Volunteers are needed for next year's committee. If interested, please contact the GCAGS.

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NOTE from Linda Sternbach, HGS President

HGS is proud to support the IBA contest and please tell all undergrad and grad students that they can join HGS for free by going to our website and filling out the online form.
http://www.hgs.org/en/memberships/applications/add.asp?userid=
http://www.hgs.org/en/cms/?1630.

Linda Sternbach, HGS President

14825 St Mary's Lane Suite 265
Houston Texas 77079
linda.sternbach@gmail.com
281-679-7333 ext 23

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MORE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM REGIONAL IBA COMPETITION

Imperial barrel (IBA) 2008 graduate student contestants and Society hosts at the GCAGS IBA student reception Thursday March 13 at Hotel Derek. University of Louisiana Lafayette, University of Houston, and Stephen F. Austin University participated at the regional Gulf Coast IBA contest.

Second place in the regional IBA contest was University of Houston. GCAGS President Ken Nemeth met with U of H grad students Felipe Lozano , Hernan Reijenstein. Charles Puryear (not shown) was also on the team.

Third place was Stephen F. Austin University . Team members are Dr. Wesley Brown (advisor), and grad students Travis Taylor, Ben Maxey, Donald Lacombe, Alexcia Gray, Kathryn Hemfelt.

University of Louisiana at Lafayette Team Wins Regional IBA Contest

By Ken Nemeth and Linda Sternbach

The Imperial Barrel award is an AAPG program where graduate students form teams, interpret a well log and seismic data set, and present the geology and petroleum potential to industry judges. The Gulf Coast division of AAPG (GCAGS) held a regional contest on Friday March 14 at the Schlumberger Solutions office on San Felipe. A reception held Thursday March 13, at Hotel Derek on Westheimer, for the student contestants , was hosted by GCAGS President Ken Nemeth and attended by HGS members Kara Bennett, John Tubb, Charles and Linda Sternbach, Dave Rensink and Tarek Ghazi who met and talked to the students.

Three universities sent teams of graduate students to the 2008 IBA contest: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, University of Houston, and Stephen F. Austin University. The GCAGS contest was hosted and organized by GCAGS President Ken Nemeth.

The first place winner was University of Louisiana at Lafayette! Team members were John Rosen, Fleur Bases, and Derek Hargrave and John Salsbury. Their academic advisor is Dr. Brian Lock. This team will compete for the top Imperial Barrel award at the AAPG Annual Meeting in San Antonio which will include national and international teams. Congratulations to the ULL team!

Second place was University of Houston, Department of Geoscience , grad students Felipe Lozano , Hernan Reijenstein, and Charles Puryear. Third place was Stephen F. Austin grad students Travis Taylor, Ben Maxey, Donald Lacombe, Alexcia Gray, Kathryn Hemfelt. SFA faculty advisors, are Dr. LaRell Nielson, and Dr. Wesley Brown.

AAPG's Imperial Barrel Award Program (IBA) is an annual prospect/exploration evaluation competition/presentation competition between university student teams competing to win scholarship funds dedicated to petroleum geoscience education created for geoscience graduate students. Teams analyze a complete dataset in six to eight weeks prior to the competition and (geology, geophysics, land, economics, production infrastructure, and other relevant materials). Each team delivers their results in a 30-minute presentation during the contest.

The 'Barrel Award' has been part of the Geoscience course at London's Imperial College for the past 30 years. Started in 1976, the program originally focused on the North Sea. Today, students a unique learning experience using workstation data sets from basins around the world. Teams must demonstrate: (1) evidence of rigorous and creative technical evaluations, (2) the ability to work to a strict deadline, (3) the ability to work effectively within a team (4) the ability to make decisions based on incomplete data, and (5) the ability to give convincing oral presentations to a panel of industry experts.

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Imperial Barrell Award 2008

"We're just four kids with shovels and a treasure map"

The first-place winning team in the Regional GCAGS Imperial Barrel contest was University of Louisiana at Lafayette! Shown here is academic advisor Dr. Brian Lock, John Rosen, Fleur Bases, Derek Hargrave, and John Salsbury. The ULL team will compete against both national and international teams for the top Imperial Barrel Award at the AAPG Annual Convention this April in San Antonio.

AAPG's Imperial Barrel Award Program (IBA) is an annual geoscience prospect/exploration evaluation competition among university student teams for scholarship funds and bragging rights. Teams are selected from each of the regional AAPG chapters, and 14 teams are selected to compete globally. The teams analyze a complete dataset in six to eight weeks prior to the competition and are required to deliver their results in a 25-minute presentation to a panel of judges consisting of industry experts.

John Rosen (Captain), Derek Hargrave, John Salsbury and Fleur Bases comprise the University of Louisiana at Lafayette IBA team. They competed in Houston on March 14, 2008 against the schools remaining in the competition and took first place honors. The UL IBA team is competing against 13 other teams from across the globe at the annual AAPG meeting in San Antonio, Texas in April. Out of all of the AAPG member schools in the Gulf Coast (Florida to Texas), only three schools managed to survive to compete, with several dropping out along the way and several more deciding the competition was too rigorous to attempt.

The UL IBA team received an exploration dataset consisting of a 3D seismic volume covering approximately 950 km^2, 42 2D seismic lines, and 4 wells, three within the 3D seismic volume and one outside the boundaries. Digital logs accompanied the three wells within the 3D volume. The area under study, Block 35 of the Norwegian North Sea, is located in the Viking and Sogn Grabens.

The Northern North Sea is a prolific hydrocarbon province established on an aulacogen, a failed rift system associated with the opening of the Arctic Ocean. The three rift arms of the basin consist of the Viking Graben, Moray Firth and Central Graben.

Interpretations of the tectonic history of the basin during the Jurassic and Early Cretaceous mark a timing of uplift associated with thermal doming. By the late Jurassic, the thermal dome began to subside and developed major faults, creating structural traps into which abundant hydrocarbons accumulated.

Integration of peer-reviewed literature about the province with interpretation and mapping of the provided dataset have resulted in three viable prospects. These prospects offer a fresh look at well-known and prolific reservoirs.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

John Rosen (Captain)

John Rosen graduated from the College of Charleston with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology in 2006. During his tenure at the College, he was consistently on the Dean's List and recognized as a Distinguished Student for his academic achievements. John also received the Life Scholarship.

John is currently enrolled in his second year of graduate studies at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where he has received the A. A. Wilkinson Scholarship and was recently recognized as an Outstanding Graduate Student for his excellent marks. Additionally, he was elected by his peers to serve as the 2007-2008 LGS Student Liaison. His current thesis work under the guidance of Dr. Gary Kinsland analyzing 3D GIS virtual reality system data over the Chicxulub impact crater (Yucatan, Mexico).

John interned with Chevron in New Orleans over summer break during the 2007 term, and has accepted a position with Chevron in Lafayette as an intern for the summer break 2008.

Derek Hargrave

Derek Hargrave is a current graduate student at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree in December of 2006 in Geology and is working on obtaining his Master's Degree in December of this year. He is currently a graduate teaching assistant working on his thesis entitled "Sedimentology of the Oligocene/Miocene Alliance and Mulvey Sandstones in Part of Southwest Louisiana".

Derek has been a member of the LGS, AAPG, and SEG for three years. He was honored by being on the Dean's List throughout his college career and was nominated to the National Dean's List in 2005.

Derek will be interning for the second time this summer with Questar Exploration and Production as a subsurface geologist in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He hopes to land a job with them next year in February after getting married to Kristina Marlette in January of 2009. He also enjoys playing golf and if anyone has a spot open for the LGS Tournament, he will take you up on the offer.

Contact Details:
Derek Hargrave
315 Trailwood Lane
Lafayette, LA 70508

Email: sanorex@cox.net
Phone: (337) 519-5658

John Salsbury

John Salsbury graduated from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology. After graduation in 2003, John explored west and northward into Alaska, working as a fishing guide in the Grand Tetons, a hydrogeologist in Denver, Colorado, and as a yurt builder in Homer, Alaska. After returning to the lower 48, John worked as a mudlogger in the Greater Green River Basin of Wyoming, living in his truck and following rigs for the next two years.

John is currently a graduate student pursuing a Master of Science degree in Geology at the University of Louisiana, Lafayette. In addition to his coursework and thesis, John has accepted a position as an intern with Apache Corporation in Houston Texas for the 2008 summer term.

Fleur Bases

Fleur Bases is currently a graduate student in the Master's of Geology program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree in May 2006 in Geology and is working under the tutelage of Dr. Brian Lock on her thesis "Cenomanian Sequence Stratigraphy of Central to West Texas," for which she received the Best Proposal Award from GCAGS. Fleur has consistently appeared on the Dean's List and has been honored throughout her educational career with scholarships through the University of Louisiana's geology department. She was also selected as a recipient of the AGI Minority Geoscience Scholarship in 2007.

Fleur has been a member of several professional societies, including LGS, AWG, SEG, SEPM, and AAPG during her tenure as a student. She also served as President of ULGS for the 2005-2006 school term. She was employed for two years as a student intern at Petroquest Energy, LLC here in Lafayette, and has recently accepted a job offer from XTO Energy in Fort Worth, Texas.