

## AAPG Public Outreach Committee Meeting

Noon to 2 pm, Sunday, April 1, 2007, Hyatt Regency Hotel - Pacific AB  
Meeting Minutes

### **Introductions and agenda (10 minutes) – Gretchen Gillis, Chairman**

Gretchen spoke of the need to identify people who will continue the committee's work as the membership changes through time. We have experienced limited active participation to date, and it is clear that we need far greater participation from the committee's members in the future. Further, we need people and participants from all divisions, regions and sections. Please direct volunteers to Gretchen.

### **Words from the AAPG President-Elect (5 minutes) – Will Green**

Will introduced a new television program that will likely be aired on the Discovery Channel: "Wildcatters – Independent Oil Men of the Permian Basin." An independent and an entrepreneur (not named) came up with the idea of producing thirteen 30-minute segments on the history of oil and gas development in the Permian Basin. No funds have been requested from AAPG; the two would merely like AAPG's "seal of approval" for the series. [More below on this under "New Business."]

### **Words from the AAPG Communications Director (5 minutes) – Larry Nation**

There has been quite a bit of media attention and work with various members of the media. Summarized from this and a previous POC meeting in October, Larry mentioned the following:

1. Provided a supplement on careers to *Oil and Gas Investor* (including the annual salary survey).
2. Contacted by a media outlet in Washington asking about current exploration for gas.
3. Assisted an Anchorage newspaper in contacting Harrison Schmidt to do a story on both lunar and petroleum geology.
4. Assisted a newspaper in Alabama on a story related to gas shale projects in that state.
5. Spoke with *Bloomberg* about Salt Lake City's growth as a new "oil town."
6. Worked with Russell Gold at the *NY Times* on an article about deep drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.
7. In contact with Paul Weimer at Colorado University.

It's getting more difficult to e-mail press releases to media outlets. On the one hand, information availability is growing exponentially, and is obviously becoming more "global," but on the other, with so much news available, articles of interest may span a very narrow range. With Really Simple Syndication (RSS) technology available, some media outlets don't even want to see e-mailed releases.

Related to this, an information glut already exists and is growing. The traditional newspaper is going away. It is projected that within 10 years, there will be 50% fewer newspapers than currently exist. With RSS technology, readers easily pick and choose the information they want, and the reaction to this surplus of information is to narrow focus. (One runs the risk of becoming narrow-minded and too focused but that is a discussion better left for another time/venue.) Gretchen pointed out that a lot of

outlets already offer RSS and asked what would differentiate AAPG's offerings. Larry replied that that is currently a good question. It's unclear at present, but it is something that can be offered through the POC's website at some point. This is a work in progress.

During the Long Beach meeting, audio will be captured from several events and will be available as podcasts. In the future, such podcasts will not just be related to, or generated by, AAPG, but rather any related news of interest to our members. AAPG may, in the future, be doing *daily* podcasts of such news. Charles asked what events are being captured during this meeting. Larry replied that the presentation of the Powers Medal would be captured, among others, for use 10 years from now for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AAPG.

Larry also pointed out that the demographics of "students" are changing worldwide. There are more "honors students" in India and China than there are "students" in the United States. China will soon be the largest English-speaking nation in the world.

### **Position papers and fact sheets – Lee Billingsley, AAPG President**

It's important that AAPG and its members are in synch with respect to what AAPG's positions are and what members think [reference made to Lee's recent article in the "Explorer"]. For example, with respect to the ongoing controversy about climate change: it's good that AAPG got input from more than just a few committee members or a small segment of the membership (although only a very small percentage of AAPG's membership posted comments on the subject on the dedicated AAPG link during the "comment period"). The climate change committee is meeting in Long Beach and by sometime in June will have final recommendations on a climate change position paper, or a fact sheet.

There are four other position papers in the works: one on Data Preservation, another on Natural Gas Supply and two others that were not named. Information on the latter two is apparently out of date and needs to be re-evaluated. Will pointed out that all position papers have to be approved by the Executive Committee via the DPA Government Affairs Committee.

Skip asked, with respect to position papers, who speaks for AAPG to the government? Bennett Bearden (DPA) and the Government Affairs Committee? A very small, very select group actually has direct contact with the government. [See additional comments from Skip below in the Continuing Business/AGI update section.]

Rachel asked about policies involving potentially controversial position papers (e.g., the climate change issue). Larry answered that in such cases the content may be taken under advisement, but under no circumstances will there ever be a "vote" from the membership.

Skip pointed out that some DPA positions don't necessarily reflect the opinions of AAPG's growing *international* membership. Is it appropriate for AAPG, as an international organization, to have positions on some specific topics (e.g., drilling in ANWR)? Position papers should reflect the opinions of the membership – domestic as well as international (although Larry's comments suggest this may not always be the case).

## **New Business**

100th Anniversary of AAPG (5 minutes) – *Charles Sternbach, Chairman*

Charles is chairing the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee for AAPG. A program is being planned on “100 Who Made a Difference.” For those interested, additional information may be found at <http://www.aapg.org/business/annual/anniversary.cfm> .

Proposed series, “Wildcatters – Independent Oil Men of the Permian Basin” – *W. Green*

An entrepreneur and an independent are asking for a letter of endorsement and approval from AAPG for a proposed thirteen 30-minute programs to be aired on the Discovery Channel. They are not asking for any funding from AAPG; they would merely like to be able to produce this under the aegis of AAPG. Larry mentioned that he has also been contacted by four different filmmakers from Discovery working on related issues/topics. Gretchen asked if AAPG might want to see at least an outline of the entire series before providing a letter of endorsement. Will replied that the scope is limited at present, and so far there have been only a few interviewees. The entire series content has not yet been firmed up.

Both Rachel and Gretchen pointed out that the working title of the series might not appeal to younger women and there were several suggestions for alternate titles: “Wildcatters of the Permian Basin,” “Wildcatters – Independents of the Permian Basin,” “Wildcatters – Independent Oil Producers of the Permian Basin,” and so on. Although this is designed to be a historical lookback (and they were, at the time, all men) the current title runs the risk of alienating half of the potential audience before the first images roll. Larry countered that it is indeed historical, and there is little reason to start changing the message. There was no resolution to this issue during this meeting and the title may be up for additional discussion.

## **Continuing Business**

AGI update (10 minutes) – *Ann Benbow, AGI Director, Education and Outreach*

Ann provided a handout detailing AGI’s Education and Outreach Programs:

### **A. Curriculum**

- *EarthComm* high school curriculum
- *Investigating Earth Systems (EIS)* middle school curriculum
- *Constructing Understandings of Earth Systems (CUES)* middle school textbook
- *High School Environmental Science (HSES)* textbook

### **B. Professional Development Programs for Teachers**

- *EarthComm* and *Investigating Earth Systems*
- *EarthComm* and *IES* Professional development website:  
<http://www.agiweb.org/education/teachers/IES/ies.html>
- *K-5 GeoSource*
- Leadership Trainings

### **C. Outreach Programs**

- Earth Science Week (ESW)

- National Parks Programs
  - *Faces of Earth* Television Series and Ancillary Materials
- D. Publications
- *Why Earth Sciences* Brochures
  - Reports on the Status of Earth Science Education Nationwide

Nearly all of the curricula are funded by NSF, and AAPG provides \$25,000 per year to support Earth Science Week. Participants come from all major school districts in the United States, and travel budgets are included for those involved. More on these programs can be found at AGI's website: <http://www.agiweb.org> and <http://www.agiweb.org/geoeducation.html> .

The *Faces of Earth* series is a \$4.5 million investment. Four one-hour episodes are to be aired on the Science Channel. AGI has about 170 hours of tape for this series, with a lot having to do with the petroleum industry. AAPG has contributed to the series and should have full access to what is being broadcast (we can also link from the POC website). If the series proves to be popular, the Discovery Channel may air a two-hour version of the series.

Gretchen asked about “education” versus “outreach” within AGI, and what “contests” AGI has run in the past. Ann replied that although there is overlap, “education” is typically in a formal classroom setting, while “outreach” is not. Contests run by AGI have included posters (for K-elementary), essays (middle school) and photos (adults). AGI is open to suggestion from AAPG about other possible contest topics.

Skip pointed out that AAPG needs to complement what AGI does, not duplicate it, or try to develop our own curricula (AGI already gets a fair amount of money from AAPG anyway). AAPG also needs to get more people to the Congressional Visits Day, where we are currently woefully under-represented (two AAPG members out of ~33,000 attended the last one). It is possible to actually meet with congressional representatives and some congressional committees during these visits.

David noted that the K-12 curricula should include at least some mention of economics – specifically, hydrocarbon production and its effect on the economy. This is something that is never presented, and should be part of AGI's (and by extension, AAPG's) educational program. Hydrocarbon production isn't a matter of “shifting” wealth from one source to another – it's newly generated money and energy.

Public Outreach project updates – *all committee members*

Public Outreach Web site demo – *Rachel Paez, G. Gillis*

A tremendous amount of petroleum-related resources currently exist on the web. The problem for AAPG and the POC web site is how to filter this information and provide high quality, informative links from an easily-used interface. The goal for the website is to funnel queries to existing information on petroleum geology. We don't necessarily want to create new content.

Rachel provided handouts showing several links at the newly-created website (for which she has done nearly all of the work to date, with little support from other POC members; see opening comments on page 1 of the minutes asking for greater member participation). The links can be found at

<http://www.petroleumgeology.org> (which as of 4/12/07 was still “under construction” for general inquiries). The main links from this site are Petroleum through Time, All About Oil, Petroleum Geology 101, and Exploration Today. Each of these is already populated, courtesy of Rachel, with numerous high quality links. The idea is to have the site remain evergreen, with continuing updates and added material. In its current form, the site is a bit uneven, with a lot of material under some headings, and not so much under others.

Rachel has contacted the group that designed Continental Airlines’ website for a quote. Their quote (the only one to date) is \$20,000 to revamp the site. Larry mentioned that \$5000 seed money has been set aside to move forward with the website, and that it can be used for whatever is most needed. Rachel suggested spending it on a good graphics designer for the 3D part of the site (which is currently non-existent).

An idea was also advanced for including career page links within petroleumgeology.org. There is currently a link to geology.com, but are there others that can be included? Should we attempt to be more comprehensive about potential career paths, including not only those related to petroleum geology, but many other geoscience disciplines as well? Also, what about links to actual geoscience professionals’ pages – those who have interesting careers in the geosciences and who might be willing to share their experiences? We might also attempt to include a cross-section of professionals at various points in their careers: some who are new to their jobs, others who are several years into their careers, and still others who have extensive experience or who are consulting or retired.

Rachel asked the committee for additional links for the site, other suggestions members might have, help in QC’ing current and future links, and so on. There is an urgent need for volunteers to help out with this site, which Rachel has constructed almost completely on her own. This strongly echoes Gretchen’s comments in the introduction that we need additional participation in a wide variety of capacities within the committee.

Web casts and pod casts – *L. Nation*

See “Words from the AAPG Communications Director”, above, page 1.

Long-term strategy – *G. Gillis*

(Web site construction and maintenance – volunteers needed)

The website (previous page and discussion above) is, as mentioned <http://www.petroleumgeology.org>. We have also reserved the domain name petroleumgeology.info. In addition to the call for volunteers made throughout this meeting, there is a need for recruitment of representatives from all divisions, regions and sections.

## **Adjourn**

Faithfully submitted Friday, April 13, 2007,  
Tim Diggs

## **AAPG Public Outreach Committee Meeting**

### Participant

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Ann Benbow

*AGI Director, Education and Outreach*

Janet Brister

Tim Diggs

Tom Dignes

Gretchen Gillis

*AAPG Public Outreach Chair*

Will Green

*AAPG President-Elect*

David Hawk

Skip Hobbs

Larry Nation

*AAPG Communications Director*

Rachel Paez

Linda Rowan

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