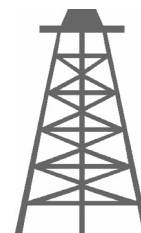




Pacific Petroleum Geology

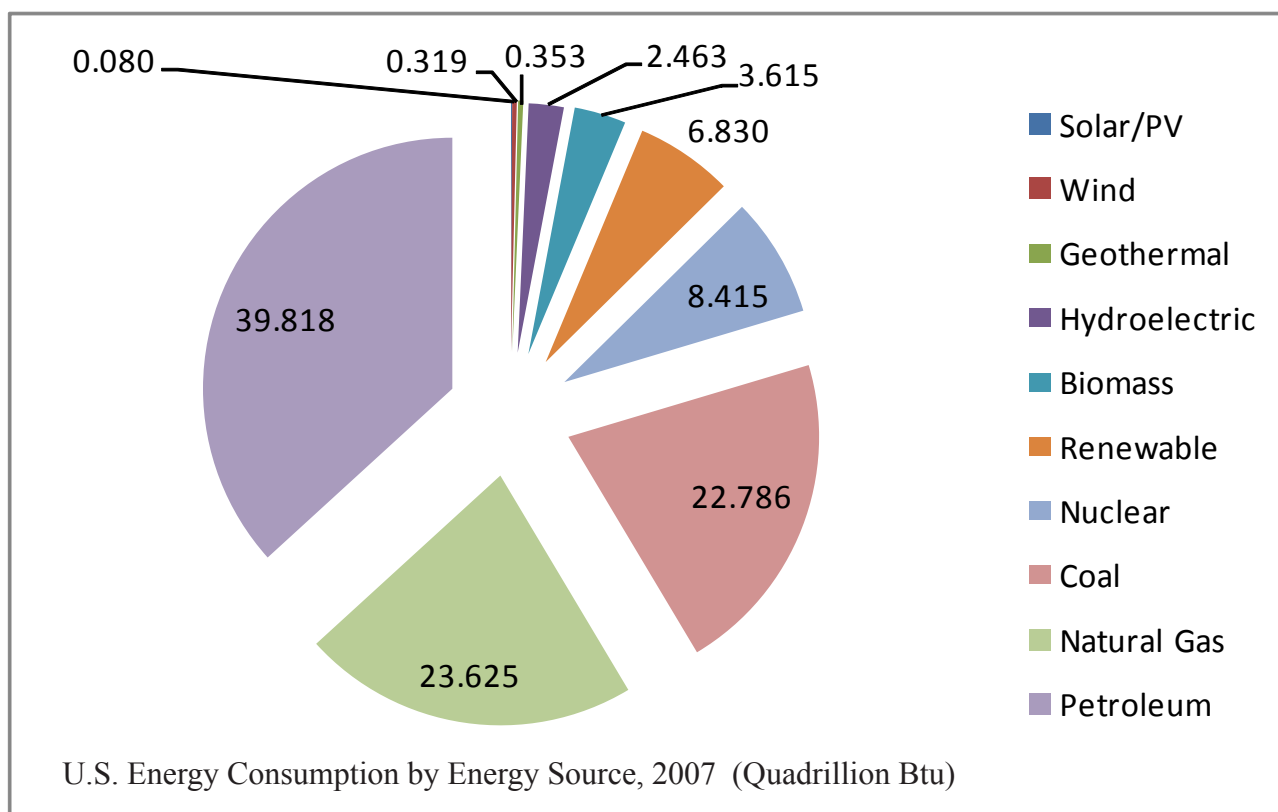


NEWSLETTER

Pacific Section • American Association of Petroleum Geologists

September & October • 2008

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Supports Petroleum Plus...



http://www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/alternate/page/renew_energy_consump/figure1.html



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EVERY ISSUE

3 Message from the President
Don Clarke

4 Message from the Editor
Karen Blake

14 Member Society News

THIS ISSUE

5 Petroleum Plus...
SBC Board of Supervisors'
Letter to the Governor

7 News from Alaska

9 The Santa Barbara Oil Spill: A Retrospective
K. Clarke and J. Hemphill

13 Tales from New Zealand
Scott Hector



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

DON CLARKE

I thank Jon Kuespert and his Executive Committee for the fine job they did last year leading the Pacific Section AAPG. I would also like to thank Roy Burlingame, Joyce Holtzclaw and their convention committee for the successful convention.

This year we have many new challenges. Anthropogenic global warming is a great concern. The price of oil has risen to the point that there is plenty of work and not enough geologists to do it. The average age of a petroleum geologist is about 55 and too few students are graduating with degrees in the geosciences. We have a gap. How do we fill it and how do we lay the groundwork for a healthy future?

Jon Kuespert started a strong program of outreach that I plan to continue. I hope that you will also consider helping with this. The best way is to talk to elementary school students. Tell them about your job, tell them about geology and the earth and tell them about the wonder of discovery. I suggest this because most K-12 students have very little exposure to the geosciences. The experience is a lot of fun. You will have to take the initiative at your local school. Why do I suggest this? I feel it is because we need to start with the young. These children will grow to adulthood with a better background in geology. They may or may not choose geology as a profession but they will be better informed to make tough decisions on environmental and energy policy during their lives.


I would also like to get the University of California to accept geology as a lab science for admission. Once that happens, high schools will move forward with earth science classes. I suggest that you write a letter to the governor of California and the UC Board of Regents suggesting this. Also ask the principal at your local school if geology is fairly presented in

their curriculum. This should be especially effective in oil towns like Bakersfield and Anchorage.

Keep your eyes open for some fantastic changes in AAPG. They are looking at a new corporate structure that will strengthen and expand the organization by making us a global community. You will be asked to decide the extent of the Pacific Section's participation.

I look forward to my year as president and hope to continue the strong traditions of the past while adding a few new traditions. I also look forward to hearing your ideas. Please feel free to give me a call and share your thoughts. You can email me at labasin-don@gmail.com.

Don Clarke



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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

KAREN BLAKE

Exciting news!

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors reverse their stand on offshore drilling and asks that the State consider a change in policy that would allow expanded oil exploration and extraction in their county.

During the course of the SBC Board meeting, one industry professionals mispoke about the 1969 oil spill. One environmentalist suggested that we rely on free energy sources. Many people dismissed the

oil seeps, and of course, blamed global warming on humanity.

As these discussions continue, I would like to know what caused the 1969 oil spill, how has the industry improved, what safe guards are in place, are the seeps an issue or not, and of course, what is the cost of free energy.

I invite anyone who can contribute to the conversion, to send in an article to the newsletter.



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August 26, 2008

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor

As you are well aware, the policy of Santa Barbara County, in the past, has been to limit oil exploration and extraction. Currently, new facts and considerations have caused the County Board of Supervisors to review this policy, and we are forwarding these considerations to you along with our recommendation.

Since the traumatic oil spill in 1969, significant technological improvements on methods of extraction have been made which should appreciably mitigate such spills from happening in the future. Indeed, there have been no significant oil spills in offshore production in the almost forty years since that spill.

Studies have been conducted on the offshore natural seeps that conclude that oil extraction actually mitigates the natural seepage. Extraction reduces the pressure that creates seeps to occur, thereby reducing the amount of oil and gas that is introduced into the water and air.

The international oil market has placed an unfortunate burden on our economy and population. An indication that we are pursuing increased oil extraction would immediately have a depressing effect on the international price of oil, to the benefit of our country. A change in policy and the cooperation of state and local permitting considerations could increase oil supplies in the near future, reducing the economic burden of our dependence on international oil supplies.

Our county will be dealing with a severe financial shortfall next year that could well limit our ability to supply basic county services, and the State is also experiencing similar financial difficulties. An increase in oil extraction would have an important beneficial effect on our state and local budgetary crisis.

Our county is experiencing the initial effects of an increase in unemployment as the various fallouts of the national and local sectors begin to affect our economy. It would seem logical to allow the economic stimulus of employment in the oil industry to benefit our working family population.

Lastly, our county has long been concerned about the possibility of a national fuel emergency, brought on by an international crisis that would cause our federal government to preempt local and state policy for the needs of our national population and economy. If that were to occur, the County would have less authority in environmental safeguards, oversight and economic benefits. A better policy would be to allow a gradual and intelligent expansion of oil exploration and extraction, rather than to accomplish the same under emergency conditions.

For all the above reasons we are suggesting that the State consider a change in policy that would allow expanded oil exploration and extraction in our county. We further suggest that, in keeping with past practices, such expansion would continue the best environmental, aesthetic and economic policies to maximize the benefits and minimize the potential problems for our community.

We would also suggest that federal, state and local governments collectively work toward the development of a broader energy policy that incorporates review of other viable energy resources, systems and technologies.

The Board of Supervisors



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Palin Signs AGIA License Bill Start Development on Natural Gas Pipeline

No. 08-148

August 27, 2008, Anchorage, Alaska – Governor Sarah Palin today signed House Bill 3001, authorizing the state to award an AGIA license allowing TransCanada Alaska to start developing a 1,715-mile natural gas pipeline from a treatment plant at Prudhoe Bay to the Alberta Hub in Canada. The Governor signed the bill at the Alaska AFL-CIO's biennial convention.

“After dreaming of a natural gas pipeline for more than 30 years, Alaskans have now created the framework for the project to advance,” Governor Palin said. “This legislation brings us closer than we’ve ever been to building a gas pipeline and finally accessing our gas that has been languishing for so many decades on the North Slope.” TransCanada Corporation has successfully constructed many natural gas pipelines and now operates more than 36,000 miles of natural gas pipelines in North America.

“TransCanada appreciates the support the Governor, the Legislature and Alaska have shown for the Alaska gas pipeline, and our role as the AGIA Licensee,” TransCanada Vice President Tony Palmer said. “Our company has started field work on the project in order to meet our target date for completing the initial open season within two years.”

TransCanada Alaska has already authorized specific aerial photography, engineering work and environmental gap analysis in support of the open season project. The AGIA license will be issued in 90 days.



Governor Sarah Palin is joined onstage by state commissioners, members of the gasline team, state lawmakers and representatives of TransCanada to celebrate the signing into law of HB 3001, which awards a license under AGIA to TransCanada for development of a natural gas pipeline.

Dan Seamount, one of three commissioners with the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, and Sarah Palin.

Governor Signs Administrative Order 242 DNR to Provide Support in Gas Development

No. 08-144

August 20, 2008, Anchorage, Alaska – Governor Sarah Palin today signed Administrative Order 242, directing the state Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Revenue to work cooperatively with any organization or entity committed to commercializing Alaska's North Slope natural gas.

"This solidifies our commitment to facilitating an LNG project that is a product of market interest," Governor Palin said. "By committing both project capital and natural gas resources to a pipeline that would transport North Slope natural gas to tidewater, an LNG project can remain an integral element of the state's effort to deliver Alaska's gas to market."

Specifically, the Administrative Order instructs the two departments to provide specific kinds of support to those pursuing development of an economically and technically viable liquefied natural gas project. That support includes permitting coordination, fiscal and economic analysis, and facilitation of meetings with federal agencies.

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The Santa Barbara Oil Spill: A Retrospective

Keith C. Clarke, Professor and Chair
Jeffrey J. Hemphill, Graduate Student
Department of Geography
University of California, Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

The year was 1969, a momentous year for the nation and the world. At the movie theater, *Easy Rider* and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* were playing. A new generation converged on Yasgur's farm in New York for Woodstock. From the moon, we heard "Houston ... Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." In the fall, the Amazin' Mets won the World Series, and in Vietnam, the war raged on. Early in that same year, a new attitude toward the environment was born in Santa Barbara, California. At 10:45 am on Tuesday morning, January 28, 1969, about five miles off the coast from the aptly named small coastal community of Summerland, all hell broke loose. Like most catastrophes, there was not one point of failure but many acting in concert.

The problems began on an offshore drilling rig operated by Union Oil called platform Alpha, where pipe was being extracted from a 3,500 foot deep well. The pressure difference created by the extraction of the pipe was not sufficiently compensated for by the pumping of drilling mud back down the well, which caused a disastrous pressure increase. As the pressure

built up and started to strain the casing on the upper part of the well, an emergency attempt was made to cap it, but this action only succeeded in further increasing the pressure inside the well. The consequence was that under extreme pressure a burst of natural gas blew out all of the drilling mud, split the casing and caused cracks to form in the seafloor surrounding the well. A simple solution to the problem was now impossible; due to the immense pressure involved and the large volume of oil and natural gas being released a "blowout" occurred and the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill was under way.

In retrospect, the simplified cause of the blowout was an industrial accident. Yet how the accident precipitated the events that followed was far from simple. Union Oil (now Unocal) had been granted a waiver by the United States Geological Survey that allowed them to use a shorter casing on the pipe than Federal Standards prescribed, a casing is a reinforcing element of the well that is supposed to prevent blowouts. Even though the well itself was capped, the fragmentation of the wellhead produced a disaster. Oil and natural gas broiled to the ocean surface in the vicinity of the oil platform for eleven days while increasingly desperate attempts were made to contain and stop the spill. The techniques, equipment and resources necessary to combat an oil spill of this magnitude did not exist at the time. On the eleventh day, chemical mud was successfully used to seal the cracks in the seafloor, but only after approximately three million gallons of oil escaped. The wind, ocean currents, tides and waves dispersed the spilled oil into the pristine and biologically diverse waters of the Santa Barbara channel and coated the shoreline.

Platform Alpha is one of several drilling rigs that extract oil from an oil rich geologic structure called the Venture Avenue Anticline that traverses the Santa Barbara Channel. There are vast quantities of oil beneath the ocean floor in the Santa Barbara Channel,



Platform A during the 1969 Santa Babara Oil Spill.
Image courtesy of the UCSB Map and Image Library.
Used with Permission.

in fact it was in this area where the world's first offshore drilling took place from pier at the turn of the twentieth century. Today, as one drives from Ventura to Santa Barbara along California Highway 101, along the roadside is small seaside town called La Conchita (known for a famous landslide that occurred in 1995), it is possible to look out and see a row of active drilling platforms. This linear arrangement reflects the trajectory of the Ventura Avenue Anticline, which comes onshore at La Conchita. Along this feature sits platform Alpha. From this point, the oil spread primarily west, toward the Santa Barbara coastline. Eight hundred square miles of ocean were impacted, and 35 miles of coastline were coated with oil up to six inches thick. The oil muted the sound of the waves on the beach and the odor of petroleum was inescapable. The ecological impact was catastrophic. Rescuers counted 3,600 dead ocean feeding seabirds and a large number of poisoned seals and dolphins were removed from the shoreline. The spilled oil killed innumerable fish and intertidal invertebrates, devastated kelp forests and displaced many populations of endangered birds.



Air Photo of Santa Barbara Harbor taken during the clean-up. Image courtesy of the Map and Imagery Laboratory, UCSB. Used with permission.

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The clean-up effort began almost immediately, with significant active participation from the local community. The damage was so intense and extensive that people of all age groups and political persuasions felt compelled to help in every way they could. On the beaches, piles of straw were used to absorb oil that washed on shore, contaminated beach sand was bulldozed into piles and trucked away. Skimmer ships gathered oil from the ocean surface, and volunteers rescued and cleaned tarred seabirds at a series of hastily set-up animal rescue stations, one of which was located at the Santa Barbara zoo.

While the popular backlash against the oil companies involved grew, the public discussion that was to have long term consequences for the nation started in earnest. For example:

President of Union Oil Co. Fred L. Hartley:

"I don't like to call it a disaster, because there has been no loss of human life. I am amazed at the publicity for the loss of a few birds."

Santa Barbara News Press Editor Thomas Storke:

"Never in my long lifetime have I ever seen such an aroused populace at the grassroots level. This oil pollution has done something I have never seen before in Santa Barbara – it has united citizens of all political persuasions in a truly nonpartisan cause."

President Richard Nixon:

"It is sad that it was necessary that Santa Barbara should be the example that had to bring it to the attention of the American people ... The Santa Barbara incident has frankly touched the conscience of the American people."

Nature writer John McKinney:

"I had been impressed by the way energetic college students, shopkeepers, surfers, parents with their kids, all joined the beach clean-up. I saw a Montecito society matron transporting oily birds in her Mercedes."

Into the fray came The Honorable Walter J. Hickle, the brand new United States Secretary of the Interior and, as overseer of the USGS, nominally responsible for the waiver obtained by Union Oil for the shorter casing implicated in the disaster. Hickle's story is told

elsewhere, but his acceptance of responsibility was the start of a long chain of Federal concessions admitting that it was at fault to some degree. First, Secretary of the Interior Hickley, and later President Nixon, personally viewed the damage. This experience undoubtedly influenced their opinions regarding the concerns being expressed by the people of Santa Barbara who were affected by the spill and the newly emerging environmentally conscious political movement. In a White House report a full 17 years later, it was stated that:

“The federal government had largely ignored the need to protect commercial, recreational, aesthetic, and ecological values of the area.” (White House Council on Environmental Quality, 1996). With the damage caused by the oil spill the threshold had been crossed, and never again would environmental costs be seen in the same light.

The tangible long term outcomes that were the direct result or a consequence of the oil spill included at least the following:

- A broad environmental grassroots movement was founded leading to the first, Earth Day in November of 1969. (<http://earthday.envirolink.org/history.html>)
- Get Oil Out (GOO) collected 100,000 signatures for a petition to ban offshore drilling
- The Environmental Defense Center was founded (<http://www.rain.org/~edc/>) and the first Environmental Studies program was started at UC Santa Barbara (http://www.es.ucsb.edu/general_info/about.htm).
- The California Coastal Commission was created from a statewide initiative. (<http://www.coastal.ca.gov>). This commission today has powerful control over human activities that impact California's coastal areas.
- The State Land Commission banned offshore drilling for 16 years, until the Reagan Administration took office.
- President Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (<http://es.epa.gov/oeca/ofa/nepa.html>). Leading the way to the July 1970 establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency.
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) became law (<http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa>).
- Federal and state regulations governing oil drilling were strengthened.

- A CIA owned U-2 Spy Plane took the first ever air photo reconnaissance images of Santa Barbara for peaceful purposes other than mapping of denied territory (Marx, 1984).

- Federal Government founded the Civil Applications Committee, aimed at coordinating intelligence and military systems for national emergencies.

Now, after 33 years, and as memories fade, the impacts of the post-spill consequences for environmental policy outweigh historically the physical impacts of the spill itself. Yet the oil industry and coastal environments remain in a state of uneasy coexistence. There are still many oil spills (37 nationally in 1994), and many of them have far exceeded that of January 1969 in magnitude and even consequences. Current politics have again placed a strain on the protected status of our wildlife refuges and even national forests, while the automobile industry has exploited pollution law loopholes to sell cars that consume more and more gasoline. In the short term, the positive consequences of conservation seem overwhelmingly obvious. In the long term, perhaps alternatives to the privately owned internal combustion engine may make the uneasy coexistence a historical footnote. As geographers, we have a special responsibility to remember the devastation caused by the Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969, and its costly lessons.

Additional Information

The images and source materials used for this paper, as well as other information concerning the oil spill, are available at http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/~jeff/sb_69oilspill/.

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Back row, left to right: Kurt Neher President SJGS, Mel Erskine NCGS, Don Clarke President PSAAPG, Roy Burlingame Chair 2008 convention in Bakersfield, Jon Kuespert President LABGS and past President PSAAPG, Larry Knauer Publications, Chair Mike Wracher past-past President PSAAPG, Tom Hopps Chair 2009 convention in Ventura, Don Miller Vice President PSAAPG, Bob Ballog President CGS. Front Row, left to right, Curtis Henderson Co-Chair 2010 convention in Anaheim with GSA, Scott Hector President Elect PSAAPG, Cynthia Huggins Co-Treasurer PSAAPG, Muriel Norton Financial Chair PSAAPG, Kathy Miller Secretary PSAAPG,. Insert: Mark Wilson. Photographer was Cynthia Clarke.

I was driving with David Hector north of Wellington, New Zealand (the capital city) when we turned into the parking lot of a giant building. A real car buff, David has asked me if I wanted to see a few old cars. Since he was my host in the country and I enjoy seeing a car or two, I said “Why not?”.

What I saw stunned me. The giant building held three stories of ancient to modern cars that was one of the best collections I had ever seen!

At the entrance to the building, I was introduced to the “Gangster Cadillac”. There in front of me was Mickey Cohen’s 1950 Fleetwood Cadillac! A sign next to it noted that “He outfitted it with the options necessary in his line of work: bombproof floor, armor plated doors, bullet proof windows, hinged windshields for inside firing”. Mobster Cohen worked with Al Capone, Lucky Luciano and Bugsy Seigle.

The bulletin board next to the car when on to note “After Lana Turner’s daughter, Cheral, killed Johnny Stampanato (Cohen’s friend and body guard) for threatening her mother, Cohen provided Lana’s and Johnny’s love letters to the Los Angeles Herald Examiner as revenge. In 1961, Cohen was sentenced to 15 years for the longest tax evasion rap in history”.

After that introduction to the car collection, I walked on into a well lit room almost as big as a football field, filled end to end with old cars, motorcycles and even an airplane or two. I took a few photographs, and then, sure that I had see all of this great collection, David said “want to see the basement?” Down we went, to look at a couple hundred additional cars! It was there that I even found a McDonald’s Mobile.

That was quite an experience! I never expected to see Mickey Cohen’s car “Down Under”. Nor did I expect to see such a wonderful collection. You never know what you’re going to run into in your travels!



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Alaska Geological Society

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Luncheon meetings are held monthly September through May, usually on the third Thursday of the month, at the BP Energy Center (1014 Energy Court) from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The hot lunch cost is \$20 for members with reservations; \$22 for non-members with reservations; and \$25 without reservations. The box lunch cost is \$13 for members with reservations; \$15 for non-members with reservations; and \$18 without reservations. For reservations, call the AGS reservation voice mail at 907-258-9059 or contact **David Hite** at hiteconsult@acsalaska.net by noon on Monday before the meeting.

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Coast Geological Society

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Contact: Bob Ballog
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Dinner meetings are held monthly September through June, usually on the third Tuesday of the month, at Biedermann Hall at Sacred Heart Church - 10800 Henderson Road in Ventura. Social hour starts at 6:00 p.m., dinner is served at 7:00 p.m., and the talk starts at 8:00 p.m. The cost of dinner is \$18 (with reservations), \$25 (without reservations), or \$10 (students and K-12 teachers); the talk is free. For reservations, please email Christine White at cwhite@dcorllc.com or make reservations online at www.coastgeologicalsociety.org. Reservations should be made by 4:00 p.m. on Friday before the meeting.

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Contact: Jon Kuespert
213.225.5900 x224



Luncheon meetings are held monthly September and October; and January through June, usually on the third or fourth Thursday of the month, in the Monarch Room at The Grand at Willow Street Conference Centre (4101 E. Willow Street) in Long Beach. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m., and the talk starts at 12:15 p.m. The cost is \$20 (with reservations), \$25 (without reservations), or \$0 (students are covered by Halliburton and Schlumberger). Reservations can be made online at www.labgs.org or by contacting **Jon Kuespert** at jkuesper@breitburn.com or (213) 225-5900 ext. 224. Reservations must be made prior to Tuesday before the meeting.

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Evening meetings are held monthly September through May, usually on the last Wednesday of the month, at the Masonic Center (9 Altarinda Road) in Orinda. Social hour starts at 6:30 p.m., and the talk starts at 7:00 p.m. (no dinner). For reservations, leave your name and phone number at (925) 424-3669, or at danday94@pacbell.net before the meeting. Cost is \$5 per regular member; \$1 per student member; and \$1 per K-12 teachers (new!).

Sept 24th: Dr. Rolfe Erickson, 'Granite in the Franciscan formation'
Oct 29th: Dr. Laura Rademacher, 'The Impact of Fire on Hydrologic Systems'

Northwest Energy Association

dlgellar@msn.com

P. O. Box 6679
Portland, OR 97228-6679

Contact: James Jackson
503-771-3887



Luncheon meetings are held monthly September through May, usually on the second Friday of the month, at the Multnomah Athletic Club (1849 SW. Salmon Street) in Portland. Meeting time is at 7:30 - 9:00 am. The cost is \$15. For information or reservations, contact **Shelley Thomas** at 503-848-2947 or **Treck Cardwell** at 503-226-4211 ext. 4681.

Sacramento Petroleum Association

P. O. Box 571
Sacramento, CA 95812-0571

Contact: Rick Blake
925.422.9910



Luncheon meetings are held monthly January through November, on the third Wednesday of the month. Location to be announced. The meetings starts at noon. The cost is \$20. For information or reservations, contact **Pam Ceccarelli** at 916-322-1110 or pceccare@consrv.ca.gov.

President: Rick Blake
Plains Exploration & Production Company

blake2@llnl.gov PXP

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San Joaquin Geological Society

www.sjgs.com

P. O. Box 1056
Bakersfield, CA 93302

Contact: Rob Negrini
rnegrini@csu.edu



We have dinner meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at the American Legion Hall at 2020 "H Street" in Bakersfield. There is an icebreaker at 6:00 pm, dinner at 7:00 pm, and a talk at 8:00 pm. Dinner is \$20.00 for members with reservations and \$25.00 for nonmembers, \$25.00 for members without reservations and \$30.00 for nonmembers without, and the talks are free.

President:	Kurt Neher	kurt_neher@oxy.com
President-Elect:	Kurt Johnson	kurt_johnson@oxy.com
Vice-President:	Jack Grippi	JGrippi@aeraenergy.com
Secretary:	Anne Draucker	AnneDraucker@chevron.com
Treasurer:	Kelly Blackwood	K.Blackwood@chevron.com

Sept 12th: SJGS Annual Golf Tournament and BBQ

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Fishing for royalties

Photo courtesy of Rick "Bigfoot" Shaden, JGS '65 PIF

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