



SPG North American Chapter Newsletter

Compiled by: Dhananjay Kumar

Contributions from: SPG-North American chapter members



Signing MOU between GSH and SPGNA



2011 picnic, Austin, Texas



2011 SEG, SPGNA award presentation



2011 Q2 meeting, Rice University



Introduction:

I am pleased to compile the third newsletter of the SPG North American Chapter (SPGNA). The newsletter is intended to summarize the activities during the current year and outline plans for next year. SPGNA had a successful year in 2011. The main highlights are: SPGNA supported one student from India to attend and present his research at SEG-2011 and awarded another student for AGU-2011 but he did not make it to conference, signed MOU with Geophysical Society of Houston (GSH) and now donors to SPGNA will get tax benefit in USA, collected 5 technical papers on unconventional resources for an special issue of Geohorizons to be published in Dec. 2011, awarded first annual awards for 2010 during SEG-2011 meeting, conducted four general meetings, organized a family picnic in Austin, and started a monthly 15 minutes long phone conference for executive members.

SPG-2012 biennial conference is scheduled from Feb 16-18 in Hyderabad, and SPGNA members are actively involved in this event and working with SPG-India executives to make it a successful conference. Many of our members will be teaching pre- and post-conference short courses, chairing technical sessions and presenting their research. We will also display SPGNA poster at this conference.

I thank all SPGNA members for their help and suggestions. Thanks to Samarjit Chakraborty for starting LinkedIn for SPGNA. We need to work together, be proactive and be responsible to make SPGNA successful in a long run. I hope that the newly established SPGNA annual award will provide incentive to our members. This year we collected about US \$3000 as donation, which will be kept in a bank sub-account of GSH. I hope in 2012 we collect more donation and support more students from India in their research and to help them present their research in international conferences. Please visit website (www.spgnorthamerica.org) to know about our activities. Comments and suggestions are welcome!

Until next newsletter,
Dhananjay



2011 Activities:

1. Awarded SPGNA travel scholarship to a student from India – Puneet Saraswat from ISMU to attend and present a paper at SEG-2011 in San Antonio. Also awarded travel scholarship to another student from India to attend and present a paper at AGU-2010 in San Francisco, but he did not make it.
2. Signed MOU with Geophysical Society of Houston (GSH) for professional collaboration. Many thanks to Dave Agarwal for his help and mentoring. SPGNA will now receive donation through GSH and donors will get tax benefits in USA. Please see instructions on SPGNA website.
3. Collected 5 technical papers on unconventional resources for a special issue of Geohorizons to be published in Dec. 2011. This will be released during SPG-2012 conference. Thanks to authors and special editors Mrinal Sen and Dhananjay Kumar.
4. Working with SPG India executives to organize biennial conference during Feb 16-18, 2012 in Hyderabad.
5. Awarded 1st annual awards for 2010: Annual Technical Award goes to Samik Sil (ConocoPhillips) and Honorable Member of the Year Award goes to Dhananjay Kumar (Chevron).
6. Conducted 4 general meetings and a family picnic:
 - I. Q1 meeting, University of Houston: technical presentation by Dip Shankar Nanda from Geokinetics on Spectral decomposition of seismic data using Mu-wavelets & Mu-pseudo wavelets, signed MOU with GSH.
 - II. Q2 meeting, Rice University: many students participation, a technical presentation by Bharath Shekar from CSM on Estimation of interval shear-wave attenuation from PP and PS data,
 - III. Q3 meeting in San Antonio during SEG-2011,
 - IV. Q4 meeting in San Francisco during AGU-2011, and
 - V. Family picnic in Austin.
7. Updated website on a regular basis. We added additional links to focus on job opportunities and resources available on web. Communicated with various students in India for research, internship/job and application for higher study. 3



2011 news about SPGNA members:

Samik Sil and Dhananjay Kumar – received “SPGNA awards”



Dr. Samik Sil received SPGNA annual technical award for his recent achievements in geophysics.



Dr. Dhananjay Kumar received SPGNA member of the year award for his selfless service to society.

SPGNA awards criteria

In 2010, SPGNA established two annual awards. Nominations can be done by any SPGNA member and the awards will be presented at SPGNA meeting @ SEG annual conference. Below is a short criteria for these awards.

SPGNA Annual Technical Award

1. The candidate must be a geoscientist of Indian origin practicing the profession outside India.
2. The candidate must have made either (i) a major technical contribution to the field of geosciences that has impacted it, or (ii) a series of technical contributions that has helped the advancement of the geosciences overall.

SPGNA Member of the Year – Honorable Mention

1. The candidate must be a SPGNA member in good standing.
2. The candidate must have demonstrated support and promotion of SPGNA objectives in one or more forms.



2011 news about SPGNA members:

A rude shock, a new beginning and light at the end of the tunnel

Shaunak Ghosh – Student, University of Texas at Austin

After 3 previous visits to the US, I had assumed that settling down the fourth time would be a piece of cake. Little did I realize that settling down permanently in a new culture, in a new system amongst people from a different backgrounds, is a different proposition altogether. Nothing was easy-from apartment hunting to taking 2 buses and more than one hour of commuting to work to the Pickle Research Campus to reach my office every day. What made things all the more difficult was the fact that I did not have any seniors or friends from my department at IIT Kgp in UT Austin. I was left to fight and struggle and find solutions to all practical problems on my own. Things did not help further when I took the naïve decision to take arguably two of the most difficult courses that an applied geophysics student can take at UT Austin- Seismic Imaging and Scientific and Technical Computing. The emotional stress of leaving Kharagpur (where I had become very comfortable), the regular ordeal to travel more than an hour to office (sometimes even more than an hour and a half if I missed a connection), the course load and the pressure to find a research topic made things really stressful to start with.

During the course of the semester, I noticed that there are major differences in the educational system between India and the US. Firstly, the educational system in India relies more on exams for grading students while the one in the US relies to a significant extent on assignments and projects. Secondly, professors in Indian academia start grading students from zero and grant points (mostly in a very miserly manner) if the student writes something right. On the other hand, professors in US academia deduct points from the maximum score if the student writes something wrong.



Somehow, after several sleepless nights on the trot, I managed to complete the semester with dignity and performed pretty well in my courses. I also successfully identified my research topic and am slowly but surely working towards making progress in it. Needless to say, I made a few strategic errors in my first semester in UT and need a couple of semesters to figure out the UT way of life and how to optimize the usage of resources here at UT and in the US in general. However, I believe that the recently concluded semester has helped me learn a lot and made me mentally stronger. I have realized that I can only learn through hardship through involvement-by taking challenging courses and doing top quality research. As it is famously said, nothing worth doing is easy.



Plan 2012:

1. Work with SPG-India executives to make SPG-2012 conference successful.
2. More aggressive campaign to receive donation in SPGNA fund.
3. Members are requested to visit universities in India when they visit India and talk to students and faculties. Share lessons learned with SPGNA members.
4. Work with young geophysicists in India specially students to inform them on various opportunities, help them locate funds for attending SEG and AGU.
5. During Q1 and Q2 meetings in Houston we will have discussion on a popular topic to educate, provide key references and highlights research opportunities.
6. We will also organize a family picnic in Houston in 2012.
7. Increase members participation in meetings and picnic.

2011 Event Calendar

Q1 meet: 26th March, Houston

Q2 meet: 16th July, Houston

Q3 meet: 20th Sept., SEG, San Antonio

Picnic: 22nd Oct., Houston

Q4 meet: 7th Dec., AGU, San Francisco

Contact Us

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SPG-NA team (2010-2012):

President: Dhananjay Kumar

Vice-President: Abhijit Gangopadhyay

General Secretary: Samik Sil

Secretary: Tania Mukherjee

Web Secretaries: Dip Shankar Nanda
Pavan Elapavaluri

Regional Executives: Paritosh Singh
Nishank Saxena
Tanima Dutta

SPG-NA Advisors:

Dr. Mrinal K Sen

Dr. Subhashish Mallick

Dr. Raghu Chunduru

Dr. Partha S Routh

Dr. Sudarshan Singh