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HOUSTON EXPLORATION CO  
Form SC 13D/A  
April 24, 2006

UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

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SCHEDULE 13D  
Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934  
(Amendment No. 2)\*

THE HOUSTON EXPLORATION COMPANY

-----  
(Name of Issuer)

Common Stock, \$0.01 Par Value

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(Title of Class of Securities)

442120101

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(CUSIP Number)

Marc Weingarten, Esq.  
Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP  
919 Third Avenue  
New York, New York 10022  
(212) 756-2000

-----  
(Name, Address and Telephone Number of Person  
Authorized to Receive Notices and Communications)

April 24, 2006

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(Date of Event which Requires  
Filing of This Statement)

If the filing person has previously filed a statement on Schedule 13G to report the acquisition that is the subject of this Schedule 13D, and is filing this schedule because of Rule 13d-1(e), 13d-1(f) or 13d-1(g), check the following box. [ ]

NOTE: Schedules filed in paper format shall include a signed original and five copies of the schedule, including all exhibits. See Rule 13d-7 for other parties to whom copies are to be sent.

(Continued on following pages)

(Page 1 of 5 Pages)

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\* The remainder of this cover page shall be filled out for a reporting person's initial filing on this form with respect to the subject class of securities, and for any subsequent amendment containing information which would alter disclosures provided in a prior cover page.

The information required on the remainder of this cover page shall not be



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9.0%

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14 TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON\*

IA  
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\* SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!

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CUSIP NO. 442120101  
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SCHEDULE 13D

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The Schedule 13D filed on February 21, 2006 by Jana Partners LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (the "Reporting Person"), relating to the shares ("Shares") of common stock, \$0.01 par value, of The Houston Exploration Company (the "Issuer"), as previously amended by Amendment No. 1 to the Schedule 13D filed on April 17, 2006, is hereby further amended as set forth below by this Amendment No. 2 to the Schedule 13D.

Item 4. Purpose of Transaction.

Item 4 of the Schedule 13D is hereby amended by the addition of the following:

On April 24, 2006, the Reporting Person issued a press release and a letter to the shareholders of the Issuer stating the Reporting Person's intent to withhold its vote for the Issuer's directors at the Issuer's 2006 annual meeting of shareholders and encouraging other shareholders to do the same. A copy of the press release with the letter to the shareholders is attached hereto as Exhibit C and is incorporated herein by reference.

Item 7. MATERIAL TO BE FILED AS EXHIBITS

Item 7 of the Schedule 13D is hereby amended by the addition of the following:

3. Exhibit C - Press release with the letter to the shareholders dated April 24, 2006.

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SCHEDULE 13D

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SIGNATURES

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After reasonable inquiry and to the best of my knowledge and belief, I certify that the information set forth in this statement is true, complete and correct.

Dated: April 24, 2006

JANA PARTNERS LLC

BY: /S/ BARRY ROSENSTEIN

-----  
Name: Barry Rosenstein  
Title: Managing Partner

BY: /S/ GARY CLaar

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Name: Gary Claar  
Title: Managing Director