



Planetary Sciences Section Newsletter: October 2015

In this newsletter:

- 2015 AGU Fall Meeting News
 - Student Activities at AGU
 - AGU Meetings Code of Conduct
 - State of Federal Science Funding, From AGU
 - Recalibrated Elemental Composition Data From Curiosity/ChemCam
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Dear Planetary Friends –

AGU is going to be exciting this year, with lots of new mission data and advances in theory. Please see the complete planetary session schedule, linked in the newsletter below.

Also, don't forget to buy your tickets for the Tuesday evening reception! We have increased the number of tickets, and further subsidized them, but I am confident they will sell out, as they always do.

The exciting announcement from NASA on the Discovery proposals selected for Phase A has struck many of us like an earthquake, either with the terrible disappointment of having to wait for the next round or with the wild adrenaline of knowing the next year is going to be a big one. The five proposals selected for further study are:

- Deep Atmosphere Venus Investigation of Noble gases, Chemistry, and Imaging (DAVINCI), Lori Glaze, Goddard, PI
- The Venus Emissivity, Radio Science, InSAR, Topography, and Spectroscopy mission (VERITAS), Sue Smrekar, JPL, PI
- Near-Earth Object Camera (NEOCam), Amy Mainzer, JPL, PI
- Lucy (reconnaissance of Jupiter Trojan asteroids), Hal Levison, Southwest Research Institute, PI
- Psyche (studying metallic cores by visiting the metal asteroid Psyche), Linda Elkins-Tanton, Arizona State University, PI

So many congratulations to these teams, and so much sympathy to the other 22 proposals. We have heard it was a truly excellent group.

With the great fortune of reaching Phase A with Psyche comes the need for hard decisions about time. I've decided to step down from the presidency of the Planetary Sciences section on 1 January 2015.

Sarah Stewart, currently president-elect, will step into the presidency. Nathan Bridges, who has served our section with great energy and positive effect for a number of years as secretary, advocacy lead, and program committee member, will step in as president-elect. He will not automatically become the next president, however, but can run in the election.

I'm sorry not to serve out my last year. I've worked for our section for 6 years now, and it has been a pleasure

and a privilege. Our Planetary Sciences section team is strong, and I'll continue to help in any way I can.

Here's one way we can all help:

AGU recently announced a new member giving incentive program that could provide up to \$5000 in unrestricted funding to our Planetary Sciences section. The program payouts are based on the rate of participation of primarily affiliated members (excluding students) to our section. If we have 5% of our primarily affiliated members make a contribution of \$50 or greater, AGU will provide us with \$1000 in unrestricted funding; \$2000 for 7% rate of participation; \$3000 for 10% rate of participation; \$4000 for 12% rate of participation; and \$5000 for 15% rate of participation. Only members who make contributions of \$50 or greater will qualify. Contributions can be made to [ANY AGU FUND](#). Your financial contribution to AGU will demonstrate your commitment to the Earth and space sciences while potentially generating additional unrestricted revenue for our section. Please strongly consider this request as we set our sights for a 15% rate of participation!

All my best –

Lindy

[2015 AGU Fall Meeting News](#)

We have an exciting program this year, with over 900 abstracts submitted in Planetary Science. Eight oral sessions will be available virtually on the AGU streaming channel, including our named and prize lectures, and Science From Current and Future Planetary Instruments and Missions Posters is included in the SWIRL track featuring Disruptive Technologies in Earth and Space Sciences. The NASA Planetary Science Division will also hold a Town Hall meeting on Tuesday at lunchtime, with plenty of time for discussion. We thank all of you who are convening and chairing sessions at Fall Meeting and look forward to seeing all the presenters!

Our Award and Named Lectures will be as follows:

- Shoemaker Lecture (Monday): William Bottke, Southwest Research Institute, "The Calm Before the Storm: Exploring the Post Accretionary Doldrums Prior to the Late Heavy Bombardment"
- Whipple Lecture (Monday): Alfred McEwen, University of Arizona, "Ground-Breaking Geologic Processes in the Solar System"
- Sagan Lecture (Wednesday): John Asher Johnson, Harvard University, "Rocky Planets Basking in the Warmth of Other Suns"

We have created a two-page PDF file listing all the Planetary Sciences section sponsored and cross-listed sessions and activities that you can download from the [Meetings tab on our website](#).

You can also search the [program online](#) and create a customized schedule.

When you register for the meeting, please also buy your ticket for the Planetary Sciences Section Reception and Business Meeting, at 6:30 P.M. on Tuesday, 15 December, at Paragon Restaurant. This popular event is a great chance to mingle with your colleagues and have some great food, but tickets sell out fast.

Note to presenters: The deadline to accept or withdraw your presentation via the Presenters' Corner is 4 November. Please also remember to add your coauthors. Letters of notification regarding the status of your abstract and a link to the Presenters' Corner were sent to you in your notification email on 1 October. For federal government employees only: The 4 November abstract withdrawal deadline will be extended until the start of the meeting if government travel approval is still pending.

Student Activities at AGU

[AGU's Student & Early Career Scientist Conference](#) will take place on 13 December. This 1-day event is one of several events designed specifically for students and early career scientists. Participants can sharpen their career skills no matter what their specialty. Registration Deadline: 12 November.

The annual Planetary Sciences/Space Physics and Aeronomy Career Night Mixer will be held on 13 December from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. in the San Francisco Marriott Marquis, Salons 14–15. The event is open to all students, and no ticket is needed. Join notable scientists in planetary science and space physics at this mixer and find out about their careers in a variety of professional backgrounds (e.g., academics, industry, federal labs). Get a better understanding of what kinds of careers are available in planetary science and space physics, and how to pursue them.

[AGU Meetings Code of Conduct](#)

AGU meetings are among the most respected scientific meetings in the Earth and space science community. AGU is committed to providing a safe, productive, and welcoming environment for all meeting participants and AGU staff. All participants are expected to abide by the AGU Meetings Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct applies to all AGU meeting-related events, including those sponsored by organizations other than AGU but held in conjunction with AGU events, in public or private facilities.

State of Federal Science Funding

Late on Monday night, 26 October 2015, Congressional leaders and the White House agreed to a two-year budget deal, the [Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015](#). The budget agreement will roll back spending caps put in place by [sequestration](#) for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. The agreement raises federal discretionary spending by 5.2% or \$33 billion for fiscal year 2016. Significantly, non-defense and defense programs saw equal increases in federal funding. The budget agreement also raised the debt ceiling until March 2017 ensuring that the United States can continue to meet its financial obligations, including social security, interest on the national debt, military salaries, and other payments.

The House is expected to vote on the deal today, 28 October 2015. The Senate is expected to begin considering the bill the next day. If the deal is approved by Congress, appropriators will begin negotiating which programs and priorities will receive additional funding. Congress has until 11 December to pass all 12 appropriations bills to avoid a government shutdown.

As lawmakers begin reviewing their spending priorities, it's imperative that AGU members tell their lawmakers why funding for science is important and how science will be advanced with an additional 5.2% in funding.

[Contact your legislator today.](#)

Recalibrated Elemental Composition Data From Curiosity/ChemCam

ChemCam on Curiosity provides a large and varied geochemical data set available for the planetary community that includes elemental compositions from more than 6000 individual points on over 1000 geological targets along the rover's traverse. The ChemCam team has recently completed a new calibration model that provides significantly more accurate results for the major element abundances. While the previous calibration model provided good results for fine-grained sedimentary targets near the average Mars composition, the new calibration increases the accuracy overall and provides significant improvements to mineral end-members, particularly silica-rich observations such as those of plagioclase. The recalibrated ChemCam data are now available on the Planetary Data System server at <http://pds-geosciences.wustl.edu/msl/msl-m-chemcam-libs->

[4_5-rdr-v1/mslccm_1xxx/data/moc/](#).

Check the [AGU Planetary Science web page](#) for current employment opportunities in the planetary sciences. If you are interested in posting a job announcement, please contact AGU Planetary Sciences section Secretary Barbara Cohen.