

**Across the Cosmos August 2026:
Community at the Planetary Science Institute**

I recently returned from the annual [Planetary Science Institute](#) (PSI) Retreat in Tucson, Arizona. Amidst all the current challenges to funding science, not to mention ~110-degree days, the energy and enthusiasm of my colleagues for advancing research and public communication of science was infectious! New PSI hires since the last retreat got to present 15-minute talks; the rest of us got to participate in often-hilarious one-minute ‘lightning round’ talks that were closely monitored for time by folks with hooks to drag us off-stage! Just try to imagine a scientist constrained to speaking for one minute... (Note to Ted Peters: I used my minute to advertise [A Handbook on Astrobiology, Astrotheology, and Astroanthropology](#) – Oh My! – coming in late September.)

Among the recent updates at PSI is an [Events Calendar](#) that everyone can use to explore public talks, conferences, workshops, outreach activities, and community events with PSI scientists and educators. Although some of these events are local to the Tucson and Boulder ([PSI's secondary office](#)) areas, there are interesting activities people can participate in remotely. Since PSI is represented by a distributed community of scientists and educators, we are also working to develop an increasing number of in-person events at other locations around the world.

I encourage anyone interested to sign up for the [PSI weekly briefing](#). Each week, this (brief!) e-newsletter describes PSI events, shares a story about the work of PSI researchers, and includes an interview with a PSI scientist that explores that individual's motivations and inspirations, including advice for those considering planetary science careers. An added feature is the ‘planetary pet’ of the week, focusing on an animal companion that accompanies a PSI scientist in their efforts to better understand our world and our place in the Universe!

Until next month,

Grace

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