



Reporting from the AGU Fall Meeting: A guide for first-timers

Tuesday, November 14, 2017
AGU Public Information Office

Welcome! Ways to Participate Today:

- **Join the conference line by phone:**
 - **Dial in number: +1 (213) 929-4212**
 - **Participant code: 827-461-325**
- **Or use your computer's audio**
- **During Q&A: Please use the question box on the right.**

Please...

- **If you're on the phone:**
 - *Mute your computer speakers*
 - *Mute your phone when not talking*
- If you have technical difficulties, type them into the chat box or email Lauren Lipuma at llipuma@agu.org.
- *Note: We are recording this webinar and will be posting it on the web for future reference.*



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Who we are

Nanci
Bompey



Lauren
Lipuma



Jon
Amos



Julia
Rosen





About Fall Meeting



AGU

AGU Fall Meeting

- Largest gathering of Earth and space scientists
- 20,000+ attendees
- 1,800+ sessions
- 22,000+ abstracts
- 5 full days (Monday – Friday)



The scientific program

- 24 scientific disciplines
(Atmospheric science, ocean science, natural hazards, planetary science, etc.)
- Keynote lectures
- Union and town hall sessions
- Education and public affairs sessions

Scientific program at a glance

Time	Oral sessions	Poster sessions
8 am	Morning oral session 1 (8 am – 10 am)	Morning poster session (8 am – 12:20 pm)
9 am		
10 am	Break	
10:20 am	Morning oral session 2 (10:20 am – 12:20 pm)	
11 am		
12:20 pm	Lunch break / Keynotes / Town halls (12:30 pm – 1:30 pm)	
1:40 pm	Afternoon oral session 1 (1:40 – 3:40 pm)	Afternoon poster session (1:40 pm – 6 pm)
2 pm		
3:40 pm	Break	
4 pm	Afternoon oral session 2 (4 pm – 6 pm)	
5 pm		
6:15 pm	Town hall lectures (6:15 pm – 7:15 pm)	

Press at the AGU Fall Meeting

- 250+ members of the media
- Reporters, bloggers, public information officers, authors, filmmakers, photo and video journalists, journalism students and educators



The Press Room

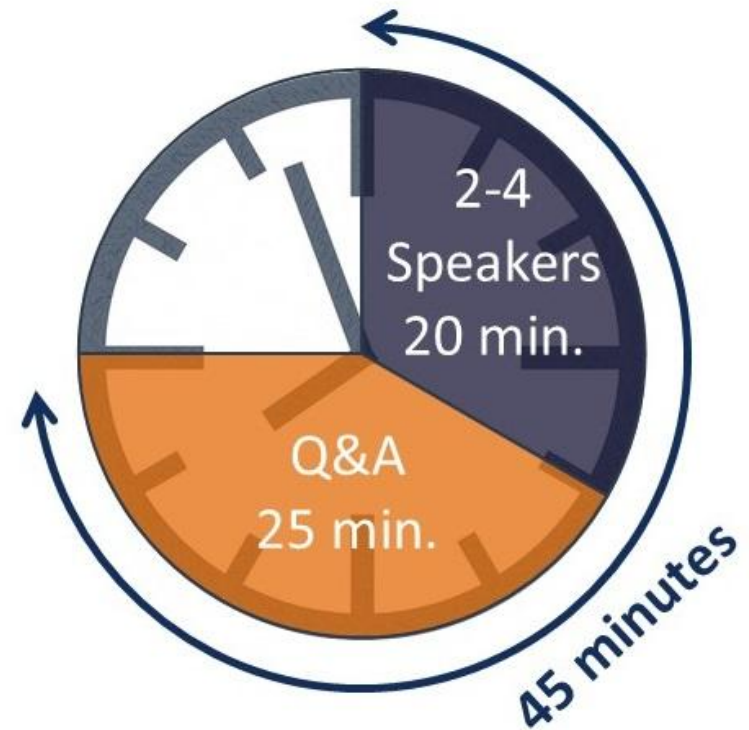


- Space to eat, work and mingle
 - Internet, computers, printers, phones
 - Meals provided by AGU
- This year: separate press work room
 - Quiet work space
- Quiet rooms for interviews
- Hours:
 - 7:30 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Thursday
 - 7:30 am to 2:00 pm Friday



Press Events

- Press conferences
- Workshops
- Media availabilities
 - Monday – Thursday, 8 am to 6 pm
- Schedule announced Dec. 4
- Events streamed live
- Other resources:
 - AGU tip sheet
 - Press releases



The New Orleans Convention Center



Room Locations



Second Floor

Above Great Hall, Halls B-C

Quiet Room 2: S.O. B211

Fits 8 people

Quiet Room 3: S.O. B212

Fits 8 people, has internet hard drop and phone

Quiet Room 4: S.O. B213

Fits 8 people, has internet hard drop and phone

Quiet room hours: 8 am to 6 pm

Reserve quiet rooms at the front desk
in the Press Room (350-351)

Third Floor

Above Halls D-F

341: Quiet Room 1

Fits 16 people

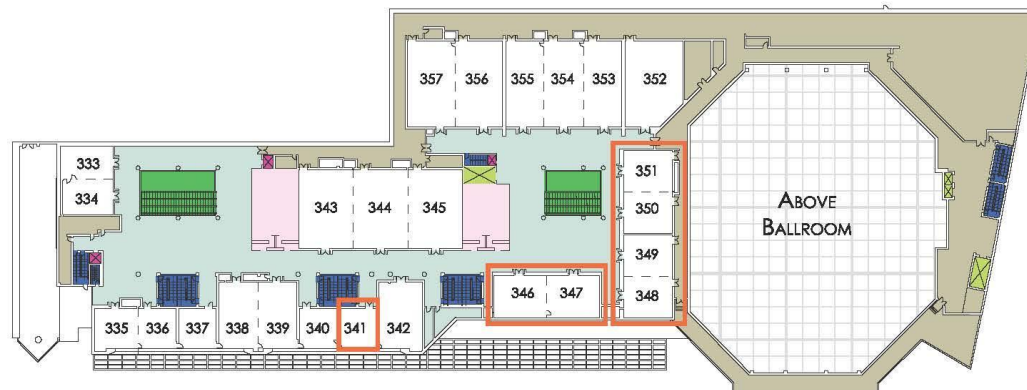
346-347: Press Conference Room

348-349: Press Work Room

Quiet work space

350-351: Press Room

Check-in, Meals, Networking





Before the meeting

Why am I going? #AGU17

- Briefings on future events
- Updates on running stories
- New stories to write at #AGU17
- New stories to take away
- To thank/make contacts
- To be educated in stuff

Navigating the programme

- Use the search tool with caution
- Start with topics you know work
- What are past contacts presenting?
- Avoid what you know won't work
- Feeling lucky: The blind search

Lucky dip: Random key words

#Spectacular #Remarkable #Oldest #Earliest
#Youngest #Biggest #Smallest #Mystery...

BBC Jonathan Amos News Sport Weather iPlayer TV Radi

NEWS

Home UK World Business Politics Tech Science Health Family & Education

Science & Environment

Alcatraz 1962 escapees had small chance of success

By Rebecca Morelle
Science Correspondent, BBC News, San Francisco

15 December 2014 Science & Environment

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REUTERS

A mystery surrounds whether three prisoners - Frank Morris, John Anglin and Clarence Anglin - survived

BBC Jonathan Amos News Sport Weather iPlayer TV Radi

NEWS

Home UK World Business Politics Tech Science Health Family & Education

Science & Environment

Seismology of elephants investigated

By Jonathan Amos
BBC Science Correspondent, San Francisco

18 December 2015 Science & Environment

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Sue Webb: "Elephants are incredibly smart; they soon figure out when things are fake"

BBC Jonathan Amos News Sport Weather iPlayer TV Radi

NEWS

Home UK World Business Politics Tech Science Health Family & Education

Science & Environment

Sumatra coastal cave records stunning tsunami history

By Jonathan Amos
Science correspondent, BBC News, San Francisco

12 December 2013 Science & Environment

f t b e Share



EOS/NTU

The cave retains the deposits washed ashore by huge waves over thousands of years

Covering conferences as a freelancer

- You need a different strategy than staffers
- Or, pre-arrange to work for a pub
- Either way, it's a good investment

Year	Cost	Income
2014	--	\$5300
2015	\$800	\$6600
2016	\$970	\$4500, so far...

Planning for procrastinators

- Peruse the first day's schedule, find a few promising sessions
 - Don't forget about townhalls, etc. (good for background)
 - Pay attention to session location (rooms can be far apart)
- Search for keywords of interest and block out important sessions throughout the week
- See if there are any sources/experts at the meeting you want to connect with

Pre-screening talks

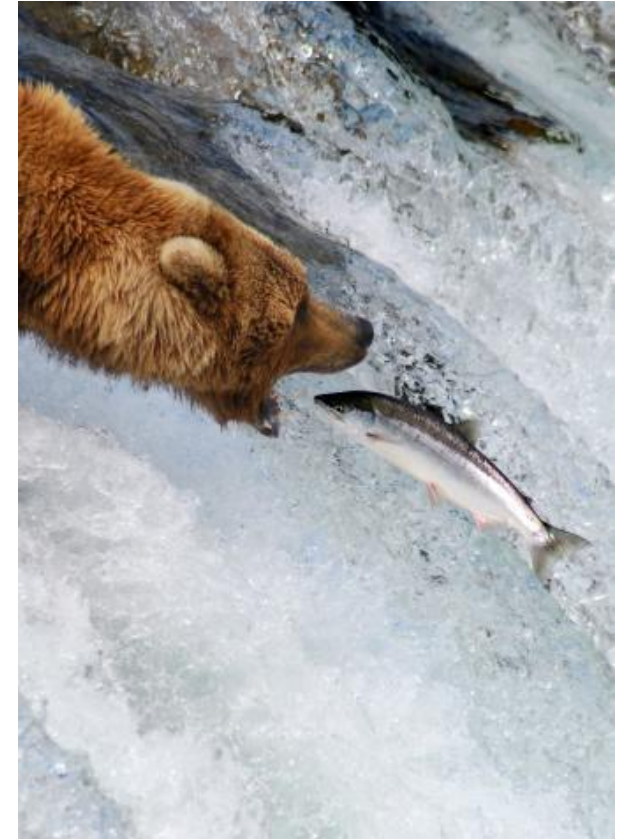
- Is the title understandable?
- Does the abstract give some sense of the big picture context, and why it matters?
- Are there results?
 - No. Don't worry. But don't bank on a good story either.
 - Yes. Great! But check to make sure the paper hasn't already come out.



During the meeting

How not to be intimidated?

- The meeting can be terrifying
- Convention centres are huge
- Come dressed for combat
- Formulate a realistic plan
- Make the meeting do the work



How to play press conferences

- Don't go to all of them
- Record some in your absence
- Radio reporters need shush!
- Work with the pack (or at least a buddy)

As a matter of course

- Scan the press release tables
- Daily newspaper and #AGU17
- Accept invitations to receptions
- Walk the poster halls (quickly)
- Take those two minutes to talk

An evolving plan

- Every night, sketch out a loose plan for the next day
- Freelancers: avoid press conferences, unless you have an assignment already
- Let your plans change, follow your nose
 - Rip out the pages from the conference program
 - Pick up a copy of the daily newspaper
 - **Resign yourself to missing something (lots of things)**
- Brave the poster hall (great source of feature ideas!)

When to bail

- Conference talks are extremely hit or miss (even for scientists)
- I leave if I don't understand the talk, or if I know it's unlikely to be a story
- Be polite, but don't feel obligated to stay until the end
- But, before you go:
 - Check what's up next in the session
 - See what's happening in the next room

What is fair game?

- Scientists are often confused about whether journalists are allowed to cover conference talks (At AGU, we are)
- However, embargo policies at some publications bar researchers from giving interviews
- You can still write about the research, but only using material from their talk or poster
- Be aware that you may anger scientists
- For more: see today's story on the Open Notebook

Writing during the meeting

- Pros and cons for freelancers:
 - quick stories cover costs
 - but they cause you to miss sessions
- My strategy: find a story early in the week and bang it out, often at night
- Then, if no pub has paid for my travel, I defend my time
- My goal is to gather as many story ideas as I can

Other meeting to-dos

- Keep a running list of all promising stories in the back of your notebook
- If you're really excited about an idea, try to catch the researcher before they leave and do a short interview
- Pitch short news stories that you might want to write in the next week or so



After the meeting

What have you got left?

- Can't do everything at once
- What got dropped?
- Planning for future events?
- Build your meeting archive
- Thinking about next year



The post-meeting debrief

- Finalize list of story ideas, add to master list
- Usually, stories fall into 3 categories:
 - newsy stories that need to be pitched now
 - seeds for feature ideas
 - vague ideas that interest me but aren't clearly stories yet
- Start pitching news, researching long-term ideas
- Enter expense data and file away receipts.

It's just the beginning...

- Stories can take years to come out
- Conferences inform future story ideas
- Conferences are great places to find sources for future stories
 - take note of interesting/well-spoken scientists
 - look back at the program for lists of speakers and conveners

Resources: The Open Notebook

[INTERVIEWS](#)[ELEMENTS OF CRAFT ▾](#)[PROFILES ▾](#)[SCIENCE BLOGGING ▾](#)[PITCH DATABASE](#)

Reported Features

The Reluctant Scientist: When Meeting Presenters Get Cold Feet

November 14, 2017 Cassandra Willyard

Reported Features

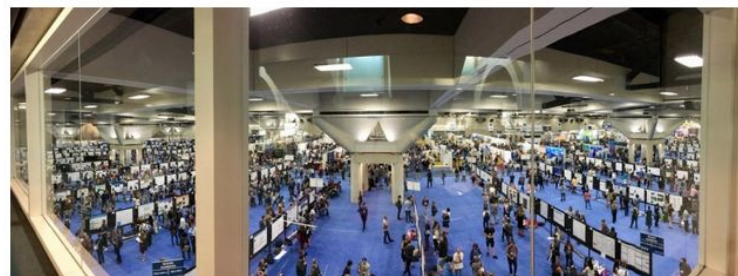
Getting the Most out of Scientific Conferences

June 13, 2017 Rodrigo Pérez Ortega

Ask TON

Ask TON: Which Meetings?

June 18, 2013 TON Editors



Rodrigo Pérez Ortega

Ask TON

Ask TON: Meeting Coverage

October 25, 2011 TON Editors



More information

Fall Meeting Media Center

fallmeeting.agu.org/2017/media-center/

- Registration
- Housing
- Field trip
- Expert tools
- Media advisories
- Press releases
- Press conference materials
- Webstreaming



The screenshot shows the AGU Fall Meeting Media Center website for the 2017 meeting in New Orleans. The header features the AGU logo and the text "AGU FALL MEETING New Orleans 11-15 Dec. 2017 What will *you* discover?". A navigation bar includes links for PROGRAM, EVENTS, REGISTRATION/TRAVEL, and DISCOVER. A prominent banner for "Discover Field Trips at Fall Meeting" is displayed. The main content area is titled "2017 Fall Meeting Media Center" and includes a welcome message, a photo of two people at a meeting, and a "Press Registration" section stating that online registration is now open. A sidebar on the right contains links for "My Meeting" (FAQs, Press Registration, Who's Coming, Scientific Program) and "Information For" (Exhibitors and Sponsors, Media). At the bottom, "AGU Media Contacts" lists Nanci Bompey, Public Information Manager, with the phone number 202-777-7524.

The AGU Public Information Team



Nanci Bompey
Public Information
Manager



Lauren Lipuma
Public Information
Specialist



Larry O'Hanlon
Social Media
Specialist



Olivia Trani
Public Information
Intern

Press Room: Room 350 - 351

news@agu.org



Questions?