

# Newsletter 16-23

Issue 16-23, June 26, 2016

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**IN MEMORIAM: GERALD J. WASSERBURG (1927-2016)**

Gerald J. Wasserburg was an American geologist. At the time of his death, he was the John D. MacArthur Professor of Geology and Geophysics, Emeritus, at the California Institute of Technology. He was best known for his work in the fields of isotope geochemistry, cosmochemistry, meteoritics, and astrophysics.

After leaving the U.S. Army, where he received the Combat Infantryman Badge, he attended college on the G.I. Bill. Wasserburg completed his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1954, with a thesis on the development of krypton-argon dating. He joined the faculty at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in 1955 as Assistant Professor. He became Associate Professor in 1959 and Professor of Geology and Geophysics in 1962, and in 1982, became the John D. MacArthur Professor of Geology and Geophysics, retiring in 2001. Along with Typhoon Lee



and Dimitri Papanastassiou, he discovered the presence of short-lived radioactive aluminum-26 in the early solar system and short-lived palladium-107.

Wasserburg was deeply involved in the Apollo program with the returned lunar samples, and was the last living member of the so-called “Four Horsemen,” whose other members were Bob Walker, Jim Arnold, and Paul Gast. He pioneered the precise measurement of ultra-small samples under strict clean room conditions with minimal contamination. He was also the co-inventor of the Lunatic Spectrometer (the first fully digital, mass spectrometer with computer controlled magnetic field scanning and rapid switching) and founder of the “Lunatic Asylum” research laboratory at Caltech, which specialized in high-precision, high-sensitivity isotopic analyses of meteorites and lunar samples. He and his co-workers were major contributors to establishing a chronology for the Moon and proposed the hypothesis of the late heavy bombardment (LHB) of the whole inner solar system.

Wasserburg’s research led to a better understanding of the origins and history of the solar system and its component bodies and the precursor stellar sources contributing to the solar system. This research established a timescale for the development of the early solar system, including the processes of nucleosynthesis and the formation and evolution of the planets, the Moon, and the meteorites.

Wasserburg was a member of the U.S. National Academy of Science, the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters. He was also the recipient of numerous awards, including the Arthur L. Day Medal in 1970, the NASA Distinguished Public Service Medal in 1972 and 1978, the Wollaston Medal in 1985, the Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1991, the Bowie Medal in 2008, the H. Hess Medal of the American Geophysical Union in 1985, the Leonard Medal of the Meteoritical Society

in 1975, the J. Lawrence Smith Medal of the National Academy of Science in 1985, the Holmes Medal of the European Union of Geosciences in 1986, and the V. M. Goldschmidt Medal of the Geochemical Society in 1978.

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**HARTMANN STUDENT TRAVEL GRANTS FOR DPS 48/EPSC 11**

A generous contribution from William K. Hartmann, supplemented by member contributions and matching funds from the DPS Committee, has enabled a limited number of student travel grants to assist participation by early-career scientists at the annual DPS meeting.

Application details are at [https://dps.aas.org/meetings/travel\\_grant\\_application](https://dps.aas.org/meetings/travel_grant_application) [1]

Travel grants are primarily intended for students, but post-doctoral scientists without other means of support will also be considered.

The due date for applications is July 8, 2016 11:59 PM.

The DPS Leadership is also soliciting additional contributions from members for the Hartmann Fund. Your tax-deductible gift promotes the careers of our next generation of planetary scientists. Thanks so much for your generosity.

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**EUROPLANET TRAVEL BURSARY FOR DPS48/EPSC11**

Europlanet through its Research Infrastructure and support from ESA will

support a limited number of Travel Bursaries for Early Stage Researchers

(PhD Students) presenting oral or poster papers at the DPS-EPSC meeting.

To apply, please send the following in a single email to [Steve Miller](#) [2] :

[s.miller@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:s.miller@ucl.ac.uk) [3]

- A copy of your meeting abstract
- A cover letter
- Your educational institution, with contact detail
- A brief (one page) CV
- The name and email address of your supervisor.
- Details of any funding you have already been allocated to attend the meeting
- Whether you received a previous travel grant from Europlanet for the 2015 meeting (Nantes).
- Please attach a letter of recommendation from your Supervisor
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These should be received by Friday July 8, 2016.

Results of applications will be announced by end of July.

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SMALL BODIES ASSESSMENT GROUP 15TH MEETING:

REMOTE PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

The 15th meeting of the Small Bodies Assessment Group (SBAG) will be held Tuesday, June 28, to midday Thursday, June 30, at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, MD. Remote participation via Adobe Connect will be available from this link:

<https://ac.arc.nasa.gov/sbag2016> [4]

The meeting agenda and other items are available on the SBAG website:

<http://www.lpi.usra.edu/sbag/> [5]

We are looking forward to a productive meeting, starting on Tuesday!

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#### UPCOMING MEETINGS

##### A) GSA 2016 SESSION T164: GEOLOGY OF THE PLUTO SYSTEM

We invite contributions to a special session on the geology of Pluto, its large moon Charon, and the smaller satellites Styx, Nix, Kerberos, and Hydra, at the 2016 GSA Annual Meeting in Denver, CO, September 25-28.

The New Horizons mission has revealed surprisingly complex geology on the surfaces of Pluto and Charon. This session highlights the geological diversity of both bodies, as well as evidence for vigorous, ongoing activity on Pluto. By meeting time, most of the encounter data will be on the ground, providing an ideal opportunity to synthesize what we have learned of the geology of these remote worlds, and to compare and contrast processes with those on the Earth, Mars, and icy satellites. This session also serves as a companion to the special Pardee Symposium on Exploring the Third Zone: The Geology of Pluto, Charon, and the Kuiper Belt (P3).

Please consider submitting an abstract for this session. For more information, visit:

<https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2016AM/cfp.epl> [6]

The submission deadline is July 12, 2016.

Conveners:

William B McKinnon (Washington University in St. Louis)

Jeffrey M Moore (NASA Ames Research Center)

We hope to see you in Denver!

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#### JOBS, POSITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES

#### A) POST-DOCTORAL POSITION IN SMALL BODY SOLAR SYSTEM SCIENCE AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, BELFAST

Dr. Wesley Fraser invites applications for a post-doctoral position at Queen's University, in Belfast Northern Ireland. This post is available for 1.5 years from 1 October 2016 to work as part of the Solar System Group within the [Astrophysics Research Centre](#) [7]. Faculty members of the QUB Solar System Group are current leaders of large telescope surveys, including an ESO large program on Kuiper Belt Object lightcurves (PI: Pedro Lacerda), the Colours of the Outer Solar System Origins Survey using the Gemini-North and Canada-France-Hawaii Telescopes (PI Wesley Fraser), and the Pan-STARRS Solar System Survey (Co-lead Alan Fitzsimmons).

The successful candidate will exploit these three datasets to study outer

Solar System targets. Analysis of these data will focus on the following projects: searches for activity, photometric variability, and colour studies.

Further details of the post can be found [here](#) [8].

To apply for the position, please visit the [application page](#) [9].

Informal enquiries may be directed to Dr. Wesley Fraser  
(telephone: +44 02890976354; email: [wes.fraser@qub.ac.uk](mailto:wes.fraser@qub.ac.uk) [10]).

Anticipated interview date: 27 July 2016

Salary: £31,656 – £41,255 per annum.

Closing date: 11 July 2016

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Send submissions to:

Anne Verbiscer, DPS Secretary ([dpssec@aaas.org](mailto:dpssec@aaas.org) [11])

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