

40TH LPSC

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL —

Q: *Why was the decision made to move the 40th LPSC away from its home base near the Lunar and Planetary Institute and Johnson Space Center?*

A: Over the years, LPSC has experienced increasingly overcrowded sessions, an inadequate fourth meeting room, poster sessions held in an inadequate space, and lack of sufficient space for collegial interaction. In short, we outgrew Johnson Space Center's Gilruth Center a long time ago, necessitating a move to South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center, and we finally outgrew South Shore Harbour during the 39th LPSC held in March 2008.

For the last two years we have been searching for alternative venues for the conference, with priority given to a single meeting site during the month of March, inexpensive local hotels within a two- to three-mile radius, plenty of restaurants within walking distance, and an environment that strongly favors interaction and scientific discourse. Unfortunately, there is no single meeting venue in the Clear Lake–League City area that can accommodate a meeting as large as LPSC.

Q: *Why was The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center chosen?*

A: We considered various venues across the country but wanted to maintain our historic connection to Houston, the home of NASA's Johnson Space Center and the Lunar and Planetary Institute.

The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, located just north of the George Bush Intercontinental Airport, meets our criteria. It provides more than ample space for the ever-expanding LPSC. Multiple ballrooms, each seating more than 500, will enable conference expansion to more than four parallel sessions in the future. The Town Center Exhibit Hall provides approximately 40,000 square feet for poster and trade show exhibits. Wide, comfortable prefunction and lobby areas and pleasant outdoor spaces provide ample room for collegial interaction.

Q: *Why is the hotel rate of \$179 a "special rate"?*

A: The special LPSC rate for this AAA Four Diamond Award property located in the heart of The Woodlands Town Center is heavily discounted from the standard corporate rate. While this hotel is more expensive than South Shore Harbour, it offers the convenience of access to many restaurants and shops within walking distance, thus eliminating rental car cost. In addition, there are numerous nearby hotels with lower rates to accommodate participants with tighter budgets.

Q: *Does the hotel offer a GSA rate?*

A: No. Because the hotel is offering a heavily discounted guest room rate for the entire planetary community, the GSA rate is not available. However, there are a number of surrounding hotels whose rates will be under the JTR.

Q: *Can two or more adults share the costs of a room at The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel?*

A: Yes. To accommodate guests who wish to share the cost of a room with a roommate, The Woodlands Waterway Marriott is placing all of the hotel's two-double-bed guest rooms in the LPSC block. These rooms will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis as inventory allows. A maximum of four adults is allowed per room. For more information, refer to the accommodations section of the second announcement (<http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2009/lpsc20092nd.shtml>).

Q: *Will there be any rooms at the \$179 rate available for the weekends before and after LPSC?*

A: Yes. There are a limited number of rooms available at the special rate for Friday and Saturday, March 20 and 21, prior to LPSC, and for Friday, March 27.

Q: *Are there other hotels with a rate less than \$179 per night?*

A: Yes. There are many hotels within a two- to three-mile radius of the hotel that offer a GSA rate or a rate less than \$100. See the list of other Woodland Area Hotels provided with the announcement. (<http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2009/documents/woodlandshotels.pdf>)

Q: *Why is the conference being held during the last week of March 2009?*

A: In investigating alternative venues for LPSC, we found that the month of March is exceptionally busy for conference centers and hotels due to corporate convention schedules and school spring breaks. Moving the conference requires flexibility in coordinating the requirements for LPSC with the proposed facility's ability to meet the requirements.

The week of March 23–27, 2009, was the only week in March 2009 for reserving all available meeting space as well as a guest room block at a discounted rate at The Woodlands Waterway Marriott.

Q: *Will wireless Internet access be available in the hotel and convention center?*

A: Yes. LPI will make available wireless Internet access in a complimentary Internet café as well as in designated public areas within the conference facilities.

Internet access in guest rooms is available for \$10.95 per day.

Q: *How much will the registration fee be for 2009?*

A: The fees for 2009 will be \$185 (professional) and \$100 (student). Fees in 2008 were \$125 (professional) and (\$85) student.

LPSC registration fees have been kept low over the years to allow for increased student participation; however, the fees do not cover conference expenses, especially costs associated with moving the conference. With minimal increases over the last two to three years to assist with expenses, the registration fees still represent a great value for a week of scientific discourse and personal interaction.

Q: *Will there be the usual reception on the Sunday evening preceding the conference?*

A: Yes. A reception and registration check-in will be held at The Woodlands Waterway Convention Center on Sunday, March 22, 2009.

Q: *Will there be a Microsymposium prior to LPSC? If so, where will it be held and what is the topic?*

A: Yes. The Microsymposium will be held at The Woodlands Waterway Convention Center on Sunday, March 22, 2009. For further information, please contact Dr. James W. Head III, Brown University, at James.Head@brown.edu.

CHILDCARE —

Q: *Will childcare be available at LPSC?*

A: We are aware that childcare is an important issue to many conference participants and we are working to identify options for parents of young children without creating liability for the LPI or USRA.

The Woodlands is much more family friendly than South Shore Harbour. It is a very green and pleasant setting with a waterway and walkways, outdoor shopping, an indoor mall, and a variety of other activities.

In addition, the hotel convention center is located within easy walking distance to Playtime for Kids (<http://www.playtimeforkids.com/>), a part-time daycare facility (we understand that children cannot be left for more than four hours per day). Playtime for Kids is also accessible by the Town Center Trolley, which stops at the convention center.

The facility is next to the H-E-B Woodlands Market on Market Walk in the Market Street development (<http://www.marketstreet-thewoodlands.com/>).

While Playtime for Kids caters to mothers and/or fathers who want to take a couple of hours to have lunch with friends and do some shopping, it does offer some assistance to conference participants who are trying to juggle childcare while attending sessions at LPSC.

Please understand that, even though we are making this information available, it does not mean that we have scrutinized the quality of care your children will receive. We are by no means recommending this service versus any other in the area.

Q: *Are there any places a caretaker can take children while parents are attending the conference?*

A: There are a number of nearby locations that would provide suitable entertainment for young children. Some of these include:

The Woodlands Children's Museum (<http://www.woodlandchildrensmuseum.org/>) located on the upper level of The Woodlands Mall, provides hands-on, interactive learning experiences, with exhibits designed to immerse children and adults in play that stimulates curiosity and provides opportunities for learning in a nurturing environment.

The Woodlands Exploration Station

(<http://www.hmns.org/education/woodlands/woodlands.asp?r=1>), located on the lower level of The Woodlands Mall, is a satellite educational facility of the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

Town Green Park

(<http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com/shopsandmore/detail3.asp?iPro=496&iType=16>), located at 2099 Lake Woodlands Drive, is a stop on the Town Center Trolley (<http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com/trolley/>) and Waterway Taxi routes.

Waterway Taxi (<http://www.btd.org/Waterway.htm>) is a leisurely way to get around the area.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES —

Q: *Where are the closest emergency medical services?*

A: Memorial Hermann Hospital – The Woodlands (<http://www.memorialhermann.org/locations/TW2.html>), located at 9250 Pinecroft (at Lake Front Circle), is approximately two miles from the Convention Center.

St. Luke's Community Medical Center and Emergency Clinic, located at 17200 St. Luke's Way (http://www.stlukeswoodlands.com/Facilities/Map_Directions.cfm), is a few miles north of the Convention Center at the southwest corner of Interstate 45 and State Highway 242 (College Park Drive).

FOOD —

Q: *Where are the closest restaurants?*

A: Three restaurants are located within The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center. *Acqua Lounge*, *Starbucks Coffee*, and *Ristorante Tuscany* (<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/restaurant/houmw-the-woodlands-waterway-marriott-hotel-and-convention-center/>) offer menus for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Restaurants within walking distance or trolley ride from the Convention Center are located in the Market Street development (<http://www.marketstreet-thewoodlands.com/map.aspx?cid=4&stid=map>) and The Woodlands Mall (<http://www.thewoodlandsmall.com/mallmap.asp?mallid=866>). Please consult The Woodlands Dining Guide (<http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com/dining.asp>).

Q: *Where is the closest cafeteria?*

A: Luby's Cafeteria, located at 922 Lake Front Circle. See area map. (<http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2009/documents/marriottmap.pdf>)

Q: *Where are the closest taverns/pubs and wine bars?*

A: Two taverns are located within one block of The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Convention Center: *Goose's Acre Irish Pub*, located at 21 Waterway Avenue (<http://www.thegoosesacre.com/modules/wfchannel/>) and *Baker Street Pub and Grill*, located at 25 Waterway Avenue (<http://www.sherlockpubco.com/Main.aspx>).

The Acqua Lounge

(<http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com/shopsandmore/detail2.asp?iPro=472&iType=15>) is in the lobby of The Woodlands Waterway Marriot Hotel and Convention Center.

Crú-A Wine Bar (<http://www.cruawinebar.com/>) is located across from Central Park in the Market Street development (<http://www.marketstreet-thewoodlands.com/map.aspx?cid=4&stid=map>).

Please consult The Woodlands Dining Guide for other drinking establishments (<http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com/dining.asp>).

Q: *Where is the closest grocery store?*

A: The H-E-B Woodlands Market is located on Market Walk in the Market Street development (<http://www.marketstreet-thewoodlands.com/map.aspx?cid=4&stid=map>) within walking distance of The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Convention Center. The store is also a stop on the Town Center Trolley route (<http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com/trolley/>).

Q: *Where is the closest Starbucks Coffee?*

A: Starbucks Coffee is located in the lobby of The Woodlands Waterway Marriot Hotel and Convention Center. There is also a Starbucks Coffee located in the Market Street development (<http://www.marketstreet-thewoodlands.com/map.aspx?cid=4&stid=map>).

PARKING —

Q: *Will free parking be available at the Convention Center?*

A: Complimentary self-parking is available in the West Garage (Town Center Garage) located on Six Pines Drive. The West Garage offers easy access to the Convention Center via a climate-controlled Sky Bridge.

SHUTTLE SERVICE —

Q: *Will there be a shuttle service to provide transportation from other area hotels?*

A: We are currently working with shuttle providers for this service.