

TSS15-2015-020017

Abstract for an Invited Paper  
for the TSS15 Meeting of  
the American Physical Society

**Plenary – Physics and Foolishness**

CAROLYN SUMNERS, Houston Museum of Natural Science

Physics is most fun when mixed with a bit of foolishness – either intended or accidental. Stories from planetarium shows, physics exhibits, and space simulations show how confused and perhaps gullible an audience can be – and how often our logical explanations make no sense to someone who doesn't think like us. This talk will be a humorous account of trying to make physics make sense includes explaining why astronauts should play with toys, why the Earth doesn't rise on the Moon, why there's ice on Mercury and snow on Pluto, why seasons aren't global warming, and how to get away with murder in a planetarium – all in good fun. The talk ends with a lesson on driving a monster truck on the moon. The audience will be invited to test their own driving skills in  $1/6^{th}$  g in a portable dome after the presentation.