

MAR13-2012-000858

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the MAR13 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

**Capturing Science in Action: From Exploring the Origin of the Universe to a Journey to the Ends
of the Earth**
PAUL STEINHARDT, Princeton University

The public, including aspiring young scientists, seldom gets a sense of what science really feels like as it is happening – the doubts, the fears, the twists and turns, the joy of victory and the agony of defeat. Even if the science is still uncertain, insights of this type have both inspirational and historic value. This talk will explore this issue using two very different examples from the speaker's own experience: an attempt to develop a theory of the origin of the universe that challenges the conventional big bang picture and a geological expedition to one of the most remote places on the planet in search of the first natural quasicrystal.