Rover Press Conference Newspaper Story

The Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) Curiosity has been roving within Gale Crater on Mars for the past two Earth years. In fact, Curiosity just finished its primary mission of one Mars year (687 Earth days) this past summer (June 24, 2014). Because of this longevity and the presence of certain unnamed other spacecraft in NASA’s portfolio that may be studying the outer solar system, many of the exciting discoveries currently being made by Curiosity are not receiving much press coverage (at least in this hypothetical scenario)—and that’s where you come in. Acting as freelance science writer, you have access to several scientists working on MSL who can inform you about these discoveries. Your task is to attend a press conference about Curiosity’s latest discoveries, pick a particularly interesting topic, and generate a polished newspaper article that you can try to sell to your editor (Thea and me).

In class on Thursday, September 11th, we will hold a mock press conference with a panel of MSL team members:

- Dr. Kevin Lewis, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Robert Sullivan, senior research associate
- Bryne Hadnott, graduate student

Each panel member will give a short (5-10 minute) presentation about recent science discoveries made by the Curiosity rover and then take questions from the press (you). You should come to class prepared with at least three questions about recent events in the MSL mission. Several resources will be posted on the course website by class time on Wednesday, September 10th.

The press conference will be recorded, and the audio file will be made available on Blackboard after class. This recording will allow accurate quotes in your articles.

For help in writing the article, you can use the resources kept on reserve in SPIF. Also, feel free to contact Lea and me at your leisure. Either stop by during office hours or send one or both of us an email.