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Book review of "Our Worlds: The Magnetism and Thrill of Planetary Exploration: As Descibed by Leading Planetary Scientists" by Alan Stern

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Our Worlds: The Magnetism and Thrill of Planetary Exploration. Cambridge Univ. Feb. 1999. c.192p. ed. by S. Alan Stem. illus. index. ISBN 0521-63164-5. $54.95; pap. ISBN 0521-64440-2. $19.95. SCI

Eight planetary scientists describe their personal inner worlds as well as the planets, moons, asteroids, and comets to which they have devoted their careers. Their work is plagued by countless setbacks (including equipment failures, funding cuts, and cloudy skies) and inconveniences (frigid weather and monotonous diets in remote locations). They may wait years to collect a few precious hours of data from a space mission. But thanks to the support of colleagues and family--and timely good luck--they have successfully pursued educational and research opportunities and maintained their optimism and sense of wonder. The contributors write with varying degrees of formality, humor, and self-revelation, but all convey their enthusiasm for the celestial worlds they study as well as the world of professional astronomy. Recommended for public and academic libraries. (Index and illustrations not seen.)--Nancy Curtis, Univ. of Maine, Orono

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