

# Eclipse Events & Main Street America

American Astronomical Society  
Solar Eclipse Planning Workshop

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**MUSEUM**  
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**What Do  
Public Science Events  
Look Like?**

# Ben's 5:00 tour of science event venues

- Tattoo parlor
- Bakeries
- Sport stadiums
- Parking lots
- So many bars and restaurants
- Construction site
- City halls and capitol buildings
- Farmers markets
- Natural parks
- Nuclear plant
- Airplane
- Academic labs
- Wind tunnel
- Billiard hall
- Renaissance fairgrounds
- Music clubs and night clubs
- Libraries
- An aircraft carrier
- Casino
- Private clubs for rich and powerful
- Crawl space of a brewery
- Offices of nonprofits
- In a Ferris wheel
- Cemeteries
- Corporate campus
- Under a bridge
- Sex shop
- Movie theater
- Streets and sidewalks
- Distilleries
- Community centers
- Shopping malls and open air markets
- Amusement park
- Research vessels
- Mountain tops and canyons
- Yoga studio
- Private and public gardens
- Rock climbing gym

# Ben's 5:00 tour of science event settings

- Lectures
- Panel discussions (incl. cascading panels)
- Scripted or improvised theater or comedy
- Using a bar as stage
- Circus or variety shows
- Fashion catwalk/runway
- Performance within arenas
- Town halls
- Workshops, design charettes, forums
- Group discussions in public venues
- Networking/cocktail parties
- Multi-part networking parties (such as speed dating/speed geeking)
- Buffets/food stations/church picnics with communal seating
- Formal sit-down dinners
- Brown bag lunches
- Feasts/Cookouts, backyard barbeques
- Midways, carnival rows
- Street fairs
- Parking lot tailgating
- Guided walking tours
- Bus/boat rides
- Open houses/behind the scenes tours
- Parade floats
- Touch-a-trucks/petting zoos (as in, a Robot Petting Zoo)
- Retail market stalls
- Sidewalk or public transportation pop ups
- Team competitions, with or without spectators
- Runs or bike rides
- Ride-shares, Elevator rides
- Participatory wokrs (art/making/chain reaction challenges)

**Science**



**Community**

**Science**



**Community**



Science



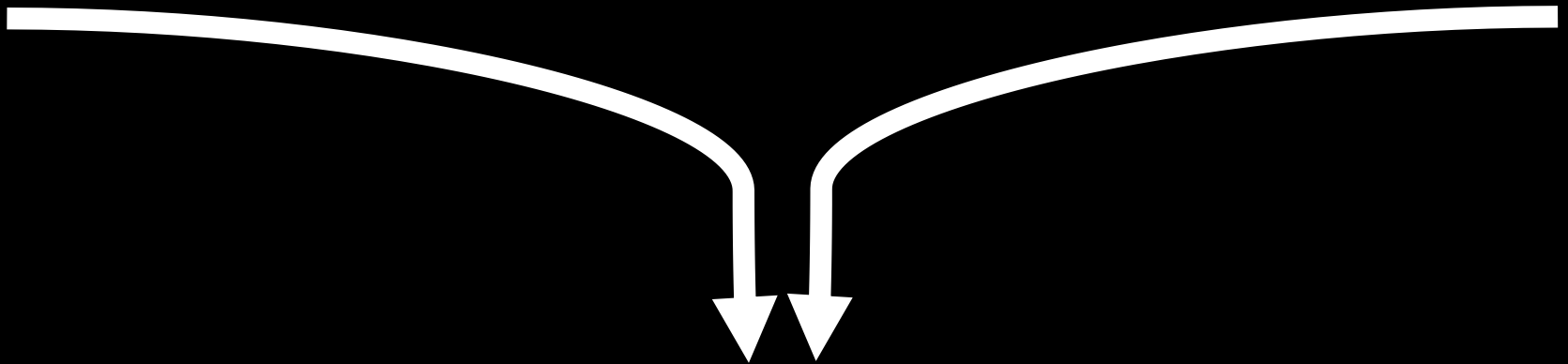
Community



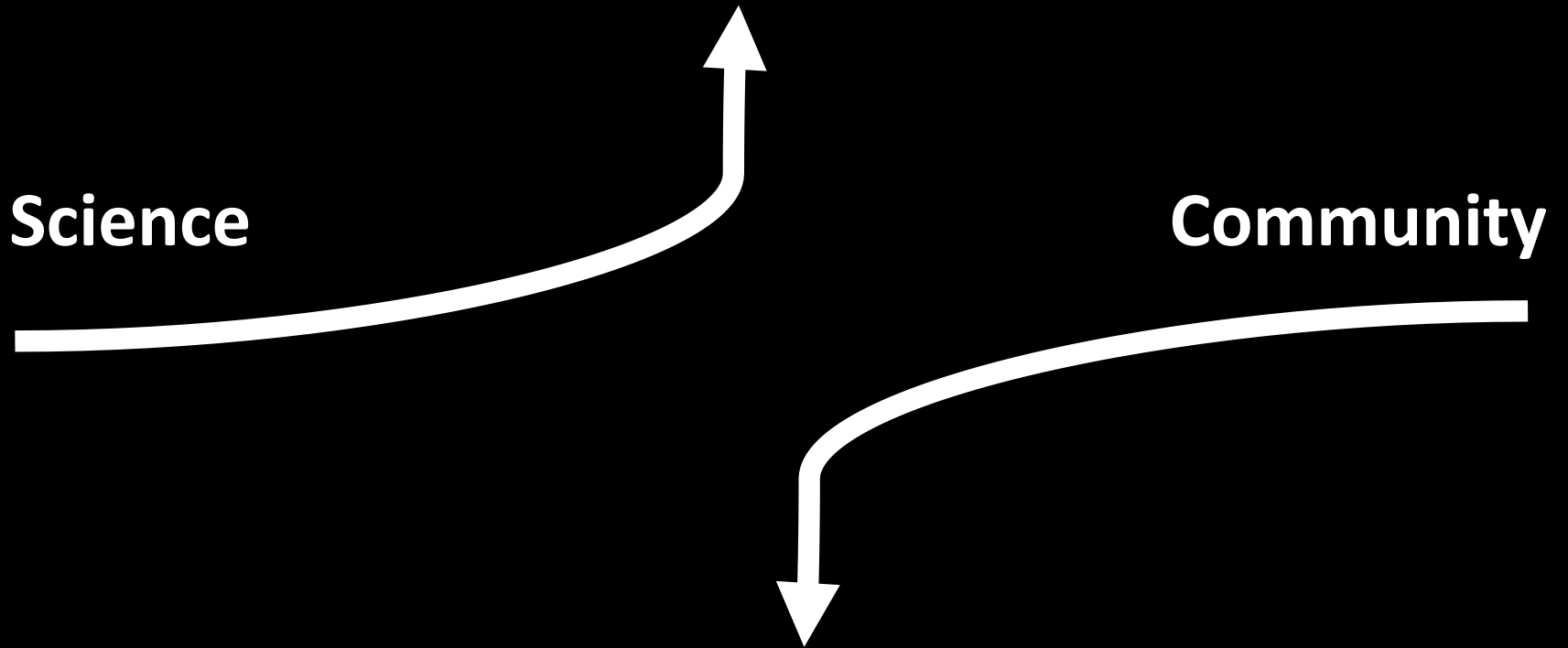


**Science**

**Community**



**Oppressive**



**Exclusive, Not For Me**

**Science**

**Community**



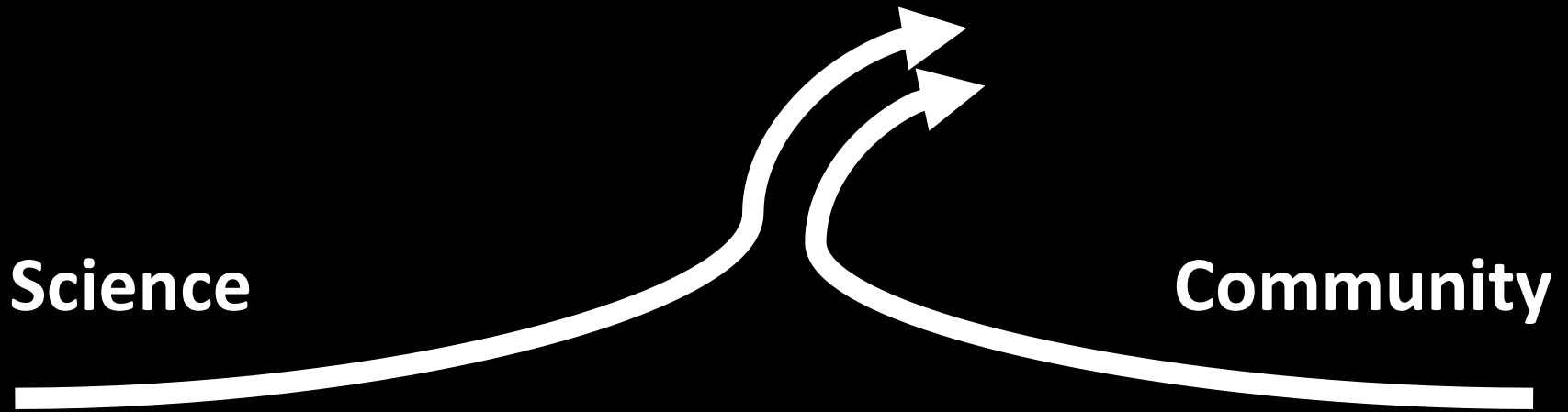
**Boring, Annoying, Hard, Not Fun**

**Science**

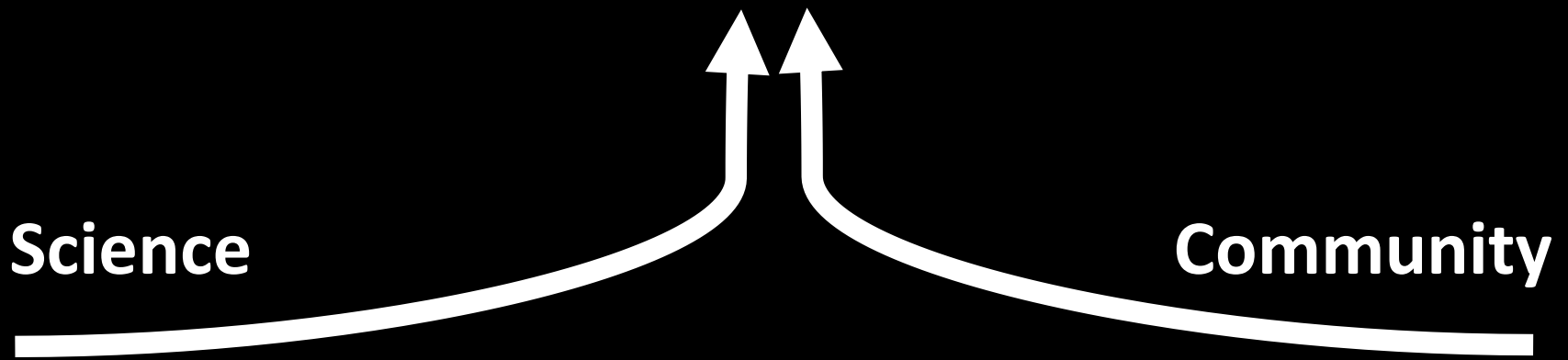
**Community**



**Irrelevant**



**Important, but Only for Some (Kids, Policy, etc.)**



**Something We Can All Take Part In,  
Part of What Makes Us Who We Are**

Science



**EVENT?**



Community



# **Event Organizing is a Craft**

- **Events must work as events first, before they can achieve any other goals**
- **The “medium” of events is the shared social experience**
- **Events have both universal and local history**
- **Skilled organizers know how to make the most of the unique opportunities and constraints of events**



# **Event Organizing is a Craft**

- **Events must work as events first, before they can achieve any other goals**
  - **It is the same as for any other craft**
  - **Coming from the science side? You may have to adjust your priorities and methods**

# **Event Organizing is a Craft**

- **The “medium” of events is the shared social experience**
  - **People bring their whole body to real places to do things with strangers at events**
  - **Attending to intangibles like the mood, energy, and tone of an event is essential**
  - **Events are powerful ways to forge and/or reinforcing both individual and shared identity**
  - **Event organizing is community organizing**

# **Event Organizing is a Craft**

- **Events have both universal and local history**
  - **Nearly universal human practice with common structures adapted to diverse cultures**
  - **There are so many forms and points of inspiration to draw from and recombine in creative ways**
  - **The expectations of audiences and participants are informed by their experiences with other events (for example, will compare a science festival to all festivals)**

# **Event Organizing is a Craft**

- **Skilled organizers know how to make the most of the unique opportunities and constraints of events**
  - **Events are incredibly flexible and every iteration is unique, yet they also come with immense pressure to juggle many moving pieces on an unforgiving timeline and always have many variables beyond an organizers control**
  - **Be nice to event organizers**
  - **Public science event organizers know things**

# Things Good Public Science Event Organizers Know

- **Events are never just a flash in the pan**
  - **The process of event organizing can be even more productive than the event itself**
  - **Events can be a light-weight way to explore new relationships and collaborations that may live on**
  - **Showing up at others' public events builds trust and understanding**
  - **An event that becomes a tradition can shift the culture of a community**

# Things Good Public Science Event Organizers Know

- **Directly involve scientists whenever possible**
  - Evaluations have repeatedly shown that this has a great impact
  - Appoint someone skilled to look out for the mood and pacing of the event, and ensure they can take the reins if needed
  - When recruiting individual scientists for key public roles, start by asking people that know them if they would be a good fit

# Things Good Public Science Event Organizers Know

- **Event organizing can be transformative**
  - Collaborative community events can free staff from the usual limitations of their institutions
  - Events can be anywhere, anytime, with whomever is best to connect with an audience
  - Adapting a mission to new venues, social settings, and cultural contexts can reframe success for a team

# **You're Not Alone!**

**Science Festival Alliance: [sciencefestivals.org](http://sciencefestivals.org)**

**Science Live: [livescience.events](http://livescience.events)**

**Science Near Me: [sciencenearme.org](http://sciencenearme.org)**

**Science In Vivo: [situatedengagement.org](http://situatedengagement.org)**

**Science Events Summit: [science.events](http://science.events)**

**MIT Museum Experimental Practice Group:  
[experimentalpractice.org](http://experimentalpractice.org)**