
**AGU Planetary Sciences Section NEWSLETTER #40
September, 2011**

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1) Message from the Section President

End of summer is a time of transition. Home from fieldwork, conferences and travel; back to classes, the lab, the data. This year, it's also a time of personal transition for two of your AGU Planetary Sciences Section officers.

First, congratulations to our section Secretary, Lindy Elkins-Tanton for her appointment as the Director of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism at the Carnegie Institution of Washington. As I'm sure most all of you know, DTM is a place where phenomenal Earth and Space Science discoveries have been made for many decades, and I'm sure that tradition will continue under Lindy's leadership. Congrats Lindy and best wishes!

Next, I'm in the middle of a transition of my own (which is why this Newsletter is late, by the way). After much personal reflection, I decided to leave NASA to return to academia, where I will become the Dean of the School of Science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York in October. My 6 years at NASA have given me a breadth of experience I could not have attained at Universities alone (where I had worked my entire career before heading to NASA), and the people I worked with are extraordinarily dedicated to serving the science and exploration communities. I highly recommend everyone consider spending time in government service, either as an employee or on a rotation. Not only does it contribute to the broader community good, it also exposes you to the inner workings of our science support structure, which is largely governmental. And places like NASA need members of our community to step up to help. Personally, I am very grateful for the experiences I have had over the last 6 years, but I am also excited about the future. I may even get to do a little research and present at AGU!!

Here is new contact info for Lindy and me, in case you need to find us for AGU or other business:

Laurie Leshin
Dean, School of Science
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
110 - 8th Street
Troy, NY 12180

Office #: 518-276-6305
Email: leshin@rpi.edu

Lindy Elkins-Tanton
Department of Terrestrial Magnetism
Carnegie Institution of Washington
5241 Broad Branch Rd.
Washington DC 20015
Office #: 202-478-8828
Email: ltelkins@dtm.ciw.edu

2) Fall AGU 2011 Update

This year AGU Fall Meeting has had 20,087 abstracts submitted, up from 17,957 last year.

Planetary section received 830 abstracts, up from 571 last year, 695 in 2009, and 617 in 2008.

Many thanks to everyone who convened and session or submitted an abstract! It's going to be an exciting meeting – don't miss it!

Also, this year we are striving to include more of you who want to attend our annual reception. So, we will have more tickets available this year and have moved to a larger location. Please buy a ticket and come to the reception at Fall Meeting!

3) High Resolution Topographic Data for Your Research

The NASA Planetary Geology and Geophysics Cartography Program would like to familiarize the planetary community with opportunities for obtaining high-resolution digital topographic data in support of geologic mapping and other research. These opportunities are of particular importance because the cartography program does not currently support the systematic production of topographic map quadrangles.

The Astrogeology Team of the US Geological Survey, Flagstaff operates a Planetary Photogrammetry Guest Facility on behalf of the PG&G program. Qualified scientists are welcome to use this facility to produce digital topographic models (DTMs) from stereo images. Training and use of the system are free but researchers are responsible for

their travel expenses because the state-of-the-art hardware/software system cannot be used remotely. For more information about capabilities and how to apply, see

<http://astrogeology.usgs.gov/Technology/Photogrammetry/>

Cartographers of the Astrogeology Team are also available to partner with researchers to deliver DTMs via subcontract to a research proposal. The cost of DTMs depends on the volume and complexity of the image data analyzed and the ancillary products included, but is in the range of \$5-10K for HiRISE and LROC-NAC DTMs with meter-scale resolution and $\sim 10^8$ height points. For further information see the web page above or send inquiries to Dr. Randolph Kirk at the USGS (rkirk@usgs.gov).

4) Europa Lander Open Forum

The Europa Science Definition Team (SDT) has been tasked by NASA Headquarters to consider a lander option for Europa. As part of the information gathering effort, the Europa SDT will solicit input from the scientific community at large. A Town Hall meeting consisting of presentations and discussion is scheduled for the afternoon immediately following the upcoming OPAG meeting in Pasadena (<http://icpi.nasaprs.com/opag>), on Thursday October 20, from 1:30 to 5:00 pm.

Details from recent lander design studies will be presented, followed by community presentations and open discussion. Brief presentations are solicited relating to topics such as: potential science objectives and priorities, instrument techniques, landing environment and sites, sample handling, and astrobiological context.

RSVP to Steve Vance (svance@jpl.nasa.gov) by Sept. 30.

For future newsletter items please contact:
Section Secretary Lindy Elkins-Tanton, Itelkins@dtm.ciw.edu.
