Welcome to the LPL Newsletter!

Spring 2016 Edition

Welcome to the Spring 2016 LPL Newsletter. This has been one of those periods of transition, a time for looking back with pride, and some sadness, and looking forward with optimism for great things to come.

In terms of the past, Melissa Sevigny’s history of LPL, *Under Desert Skies* [2], has been published, allowing those who were here in the early days to relive their glory, and allowing those who weren’t here to learn something about how we got to be what we are today. But there has been some sadness, too. Professor Elizabeth Roemer, who chaired the task force that set up the Department of Planetary Sciences based on the research-focused Lunar and Planetary Laboratory, passed away this spring. So did Mildred Matthews, who shepherded the University of Arizona Press Space Science series when it was headquartered here.

But the future looks as bright as the past.

On September 8, OSIRIS-REx [3] is scheduled to launch from Kennedy Space Center, on its way to asteroid Bennu to perform the most detailed study of an asteroid ever, and then to return a sample. The instruments have been delivered, the spacecraft is passing every test so far, and we’re all trying to figure out how best to get to the launch and/or celebrate the mission.

Meanwhile, the faculty, staff and students have had a grueling interview schedule, as multiple opportunities to hire new faculty converged on a single six-month window, bringing lots of
candidates for faculty positions. None of those searches is complete yet, but they brought excellent candidates, the kind of men and women who will make LPL as much of a center for planetary science in the 2020s as it ever was in the “golden days” that Melissa Sevigny recounted.

And, of course, we have had the usual amount of first-rate science, award-winning faculty, students and staff, and inspiring outreach.

Enjoy the newsletter. And as always, for alumni, retirees, and others who have been a part of the LPL family but are no longer at LPL, if you have news about you, your career, or your family, please let us know, so that we can pass it along to all the people who would be interested.

Timothy D. Swindle, Ph.D.
Department Head and Laboratory Director