Welcome to the LPL Newsletter! [1]

Fall 2009 Edition

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Welcome to the first installment of the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory/Department of Planetary Sciences (LPL) electronic newsletter, 50 years in the making.

We will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Gerard Kuiper's founding of LPL in 2010 with a variety of events (which will be posted on the website, in the next two newsletters, and in e-mails to many of you). In that time, our faculty, staff, students, and alumni have investigated the Sun, every planet, dozens of moons, thousands of other smaller objects in our solar system, and now planetary systems around other stars. LPL continues to be on the forefront of research, whether it is missions to Mars or theoretical investigations of extrasolar planets. But we have never had a newsletter, and a number of people have let us know that the time has come.
The newsletter will contain links to press releases about some of LPL's research accomplishments, but it is mostly devoted to the people who make this an organization that is not only a scientific powerhouse, but is also a congenial place to work, at least on most days. In this first issue, we have lists of some of the research awards and accomplishments of LPLers, but we also have notes about the annual Bratfest and its two descendants, a report on the last grad student field trip, a description of a curriculum innovation spurred in part by an LPL alum, and news from several alumni.

Consider this newsletter a work in progress---LPL includes, and has produced, many experimental scientists, after all, so it shouldn't be a surprise that we will be experimenting with this. We hope to publish two issues per year. Particularly for the first few issues, please let us know what you do and don't like, so that we can tailor it to better suit your needs. Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy finding out more about what has been happening to the LPL family.

Michael J. Drake
Head and Director

Timothy D. Swindle
Assistant Department Head
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