



From the Editor

This month, I would like to report to you on some recent discussions with the associate editors and other developments.

Meeting with the associate editors: The associate editors met in Houston during the Lunar & Planetary Science Conference. The associate editors had some discussions about how to handle the high demand for space in *MAPS*. The associate editors and I agree that one area that could alleviate the demand for more and more pages of *MAPS* is trying to limit the size of papers. This could be accomplished by authors being more concise and by better efforts by authors, the associate editors, and the editor to control the size of extremely lengthy papers. We have also discussed the possibility of page charges for the papers over a certain size. This idea has been discussed with the Society's Council and would also be a way to generate some additional revenue. In my opinion, we will eventually have to go for such system, but it is my intention to keep such page charges to a minimum, as is the view of the Council. However, charges for papers that are more than about 15 printed pages long, are a distinct possibility. I would note that we already charge for color pages, as this is an added value to the paper. I think authors could also view charges for very long papers as an added value, which might require some contribution to the costs of the journal. Exceptions would, of course, be made for invited papers and medal contributions. Such a system is under discussion, and I would value any feedback from authors on such a plan. Another alternative, which the associate editors do not favor, would be to not publish some large tables of data—a practice used by some other journals. We believe this might devalue the usefulness of *MAPS* as a journal of record in the field of meteoritics and the planetary sciences in which all data are published.

New online submission system: Our staff are working to institute a new online submission and review system for *MAPS* papers. This would gradually replace our current system of handling most papers in the review process by e-mail. We have signed a contract with an excellent service to

provide a Web-based paper submission and reviewing system. The final papers will still be sent to our typesetting department, who will still prepare the galley proofs. This software has a sophisticated tracking system so that authors, reviewers, the editor, and the associate editors can track the status of papers at any time. This will be of great benefit to authors and editors alike. This new system has the strong support of the associate editors and, I believe, will be welcomed by authors submitting to *MAPS*. The system should be in place in early summer 2004. Existing submissions will be handled using e-mail or regular mail, and all new submissions will be handled using the new system. We will make an announcement when the system is up and running.

Electronic *MAPS*: We continue to provide the electronic version of *MAPS* using Ingenta.com. The Publications Committee of the Society has recently been considering several proposals to “bundle” electronic versions of *MAPS* into one of the various packages that are purchased by university libraries. The electronic publishing and distribution world is in a state of flux. We will work closely with the Society to ensure that *MAPS* has an appropriately high profile in both print and electronic media. I would also note that the high rate of change in the electronic journal work means that the printed journal will also remain a valuable resource for the foreseeable future.

Finally, I would like to point out the high level of submissions and quality of papers submitted to *MAPS*. It is a very healthy sign of the state of this journal. Our journal continues to receive a high number of submissions (some 100 in the last 6 months) and a high “impact factor,” an estimate of the number of citations to *MAPS* papers.

A. J. Timothy Jull
Editor

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