

Guest Editorial

6th Triennial Special Issue of the IEEE Transactions on Plasma Science

Images in Plasma Science

CONVEYING technical information in all forms is becoming more visual, and that is particularly true in plasma science. As the volume and complexity of data increase, we increasingly rely on our ability to absorb and analyze information visually. A side benefit of visualization to convey information is that these images are often artistic—visually appealing and compelling images to experts and nonexperts alike.

To acknowledge the importance and artistry of images in our discipline, the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON PLASMA SCIENCE (TPS) has hosted the Special Issue on Images in Plasma Science, and this is the 6th Triennial Issue. In this issue are some of the most compelling and artistic of images in plasma science. (Please note that many of the images appearing in black and white in the printed volume are in color on the TPS Web site <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/RecentIssue.jsp?punumber=27>.) These images span a broad swath of plasma science, from microplasmas to tokamaks and space plasmas, and from femtosecond processes to those occurring on astronomical timescales. The quality of the science and artistry of the images are impressive and compelling.

The growing popularity of images in plasma science is evident in the history of the Images Special Issue. The 1st Images Special Issue was published in 1996 and contained 61 papers. The 2nd through 5th issues contained 72, 97, 181, and 278 papers, respectively. For the 6th triennial issue, we are pleased to have 484 papers from 39 countries—one of the largest and most diverse sets of papers on plasma science ever published. The Administrative Committee of the IEEE Nuclear and Plasma Sciences Society generously donated funds for color charges for papers having particularly compelling images.

This Images Special Issue would not have been possible without the efforts of nearly 1000 referees who agreed to take their valuable time to review papers. We would particularly like to thank the following colleagues for having done more than their fair share of reviewing: David Graves, Alec Gallimore, John Foster, Demetre Economou, Zhongmin (Andy) Xiong,

Iain Boyd, Alexander Thomas, and Ed Barnat. We would also like to thank the IEEE editorial staff for their tireless and expert efforts in processing the extraordinarily large number of submissions: Margie Rafferty, Sean Gillespie, and George Criscione. The Images Special Issue is and has been a team effort from a guest editing perspective. We have been very fortunate to have had distinguished and hard working Guest Editors over the years, including David Ruzic, Shahid Rauf, Greg Hebner, and Natalia Babaeva.

We are deeply indebted to Dr. Julia Falkovitch-Khain who so expertly managed the very large number of submissions. We would not have been able to edit this issue without her. Finally, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Steven Gitomer, Editor-in-Chief of the TPS. Steve has been extremely supportive of the Images Special Issue series over the years through his mentoring, interfacing with IEEE publications to enable the unique features of these issues, and soliciting and obtaining funds to support color charges.

The Images in Plasma Science series of Special Issues has grown to be successful, and we have enjoyed being Guest Editors of the series. Having said that, the time has come to hand the editing reins off to another team. This will be the last Special Issue on Images in Plasma Science for which our team serves as Guest Editors. We hope that one or more of our colleagues will take the opportunity to be Guest Editors of the 7th Triennial Issue and place their unique mark on the series.

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