Contents

vii  Conference Committee
ix  Introduction

SESSION 1  POLARIZATION METROLOGY AND INSTRUMENTATION

8873 02  Infrared wire grid polarizers: metrology and modeling [8873-1]
M. C. George, J. Bergquist, R. Petrova, B. Wang, E. Gardner, MOXTEK, Inc. (United States)

8873 03  Assessing consistency of a Mueller matrix measurement by rotation of the sample under test [8873-2]
T. A. Germer, National Institute of Standards and Technology (United States)

8873 04  Single-angle-of-incidence single-element rotating-polarizer (Single SERP) ellipsometer for film-substrate systems [8873-3]
A. R. M. Zaghloul, Cairo Univ. (Egypt)

8873 05  Real-time combined reflection and transmission ellipsometry for film-substrate systems [8873-4]
M. Elshazly-Zaghloul, Cairo Univ. (Egypt)

8873 06  Evaluation of calibration methods for visible-spectrum division-of-focal-plane polarimeters [8873-5]
S. B. Powell, V. Gruev, Washington Univ. in St. Louis (United States)

SESSION 2  MATHEMATICS OF COHERENCE, POLARIZATION, AND SCATTERING POLARIZATION

8873 07  Mathematical tools for the analysis and exploitation of polarimetric measurements (Invited Paper) [8873-6]
J. J. Gil, Univ. de Zaragoza (Spain)

8873 09  3D radiative transfer effects in multi-angle/multispectral radio-polarimetric signals from a mixture of clouds and aerosols viewed by a non-imaging sensor [8873-8]
A. B. Davis, M. J. Garay, F. Xu, Jet Propulsion Lab. (United States); Z. Qu, Jet Propulsion Lab. (United States) and Raytheon Co. (United States); C. Emde, Ludwig-Maximilians-Univ. München (Germany)
SESSION 3  POLARIZATION IN REMOTE SENSING

8873 0B  Airborne multiangle spectropolarimetric imager (AirMSPI) observations over California during NASA’s polarimeter definition experiment (PODEX) (Invited Paper) [8873-9]
D. J. Diner, M. J. Garay, O. V. Kalashnikova, B. E. Rheingans, S. Geier, M. A. Bull, V. M. Jovanovic, F. Xu, C. J. Bruegge, Jet Propulsion Lab. (United States); A. Davis, The Univ. of Texas at Austin Ctr. for Space Research (United States); K. Crabtree, R. A. Chipman, College of Optical Sciences, The Univ. of Arizona (United States)

8873 0C  Influence of polarization phenomenology on material discriminability using multi-view polarimetric imagery [8873-10]
C. Devaraj, South Dakota State Univ. (United States); M. Gartley, J. Schott, Rochester Institute of Technology (United States)

8873 0D  How clear-sky polarization varies with wavelength in the visible-NIR [8873-11]
N. J. Pust, J. A. Shaw, Montana State Univ. (United States)

SESSION 4  POLARIZATION APPLICATIONS I

8873 0E  Mueller matrix microscopy (Invited Paper) [8873-12]
M. Mujat, R. D. Ferguson, N. Iftimia, Physical Sciences Inc. (United States)

8873 0F  Extracting the inclination angle of nerve fibers within the human brain with 3D-PLI independent of system properties [8873-13]
J. Reckfort, H. Wiese, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany) and Bergische Univ. Wuppertal (Germany); M. Dohmen, D. Grässel, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany); U. Pietrzyk, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany) and Bergische Univ. Wuppertal (Germany); K. Zilles, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany), RWTH Aachen Univ. (Germany), and JARA Translational Brain Medicine (Germany); K. Amunts, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany) and Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (Germany); M. Axer, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany)

8873 0H  LWIR polarization sensing: investigation of liquids and solids with MoDDIFS [8873-15]
G. Fortin, AEREX Avionics Inc. (Canada); J.-M. Thériault, Defence Research and Development Canada, Valcartier (Canada); P. Lacasse, AEREX Avionics Inc. (Canada)

8873 0I  Using linear polarization for LWIR hyperspectral sensing of liquid contaminants [8873-16]
J.-M. Thériault, Defence Research and Development Canada, Valcartier (Canada); G. Fortin, P. Lacasse, AEREX Avionics Inc. (Canada); F. Bouffard, H. Lavoie, Defence Research and Development Canada, Valcartier (Canada)

SESSION 5  POLARIZATION IMAGING SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS

8873 0J  Thermally stable imaging channeled spectropolarimetry [8873-17]
J. Craven-Jones, B. M. Way, J. Hunt, Sandia National Labs. (United States); M. W. Kudenov, North Carolina State Univ. (United States); J. A. Mercier, Sandia National Labs. (United States)
A novel design for a spectropolarimeter: SPEX [8873-18]
A. L. Verlaan, H. van Brug, H. Visser, TNO (Netherlands)

Fabrication and performance evaluation of pixelated nano-wire grid polarizer [8873-19]
S. Gao, R. Njuguna, V. Gruev, Washington Univ. in St. Louis (United States)

Wide field snapshot imaging polarimeter using modified Savart plates [8873-20]
N. Saito, S. Odate, K. Otaki, Nikon Corp. (Japan); M. Kubota, R. Kitahara, K. Oka, Hokkaido Univ. (Japan)

SWIR active polarization imaging for material identification [8873-22]
D. A. LeMaster, Air Force Research Lab. (United States); A. H. Mahamat, College of Optical Sciences, The Univ. of Arizona (United States); B. M. Ratliff, Space Computer Corp. (United States); A. S. Alenin, J. S. Tyo, College of Optical Sciences, The Univ. of Arizona (United States); B. M. Koch, Air Force Research Lab. (United States)

Evaluation of Mueller matrix of achromatic axially symmetric wave plate [8873-23]
T. Wakayama, Saitama Medical Univ. (Japan); K. Komaki, Saitama Medical Univ. (Japan) and Utsunomiya Univ. (Japan); I. J. Vaughn, J. S. Tyo, College of Optical Sciences, The Univ. of Arizona (United States); Y. Otani, Utsunomiya Univ. (Japan); T. Yoshizawa, NPO 3D Associates (Japan)

Compact spatial heterodyne interferometer using polarization gratings [8873-24]
M. W. Kudenov, M. N. Miskiewicz, M. J. Escuti, North Carolina State Univ. (United States); J. Coward, SA Photonics (United States)

Spectroscopic full polarimeters using spatial carriers [8873-25]
K. Oka, Y. Haga, Y. Komaki, Hokkaido Univ. (Japan)

Design of a polarimeter with two ferroelectric liquid crystal panels [8873-26]
A. Peinado, A. Lizana, J. Campos, Univ. Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)

The retrieval of scattering coefficient of marine particles from polarimetric observations [8873-29]

Fully polarimetric passive W-band millimeter wave imager for wide area search [8873-30]
J. Tedeschi, B. Bernacki, D. Sheen, J. Kelly, D. McMakin, Pacific Northwest National Lab. (United States)
SIMULATIONS OF POLARIZATION DEPENDENT CONTRAST DURING THE DIURNAL HEATING CYCLE FOR PASSIVE MILLIMETER-WAVE IMAGERY (INVITED PAPER) [8873-31]
J. P. Wilson, M. Murakowski, Univ. of Delaware (United States); C. A. Schuetz, Phase Sensitive Innovations, Inc. (United States); D. W. Prather, Univ. of Delaware (United States)

SESSION 9 PROCESSING AND DISPLAYING POLARIMETRIC IMAGERY

MATERIAL CHARACTERIZATION USING PASSIVE MULTISPECTRAL POLARIMETRIC IMAGERY [8873-35]
M. A. Sawyer, M. W. Hyde IV, Air Force Institute of Technology (United States)

POSTER SESSION

PHOTOELASTIC MODULATOR NON-IDEALITIES IN MAGNETO-OPTICAL POLARIZATION MEASUREMENTS [8873-37]
S. Vandendriessche, T. Verbiest, Katholieke Univ. Leuven (Belgium)

OPTICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF AMBER FROM CHIAPAS, MEXICO [8873-39]
G. López-Morales, R. Espinosa-Luna, C. Frausto-Reyes, Ctr. de Investigaciones en Óptica, A.C. (Mexico)

A COMPACT AND ROBUST METHOD FOR SPECTROPOLARIMETRY [8873-40]
W. B. Sparks, Space Telescope Science Institute (United States)

ORIENTATIONAL TOMOGRAPHY OF OPTICAL AXES DIRECTIONS DISTRIBUTIONS OF MULTILAYER BIOLOGICAL TISSUES BIREFRINGENT POLYCRYSTALLINE NETWORKS [8873-41]
N. I. Zabolotna, R. Y. Dovhaliuk, Vinnytsia National Technical Univ. (Ukraine)

CALIOP RECEIVER TRANSIENT RESPONSE STUDY [8873-45]
X. Lu, Y. Hu, NASA Langley Research Ctr. (United States); Z. Liu, NASA Langley Research Ctr. (United States) and Science Systems and Applications, Inc. (United States); S. Zeng, C. Trepte, NASA Langley Research Ctr. (United States)

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   1 Polarization Metrology and Instrumentation
      Julia M. Craven-Jones, Sandia National Laboratories (United States)
   2 Mathematics of Coherence, Polarization, and Scattering Polarization
      Joseph A. Shaw, Montana State University (United States)
   3 Polarization in Remote Sensing
      Jean-Marc Thériault, Defence Research and Development Canada, Valcartier (Canada)
   4 Polarization Applications I
      Joseph A. Shaw, Montana State University (United States)
5 Polarization Imaging Systems and Components
   J. Scott Tyo, College of Optical Sciences, The University of Arizona (United States)

6 Polarization-based Optical Systems and Components
   Michael W. Kudenov, North Carolina State University (United States)

7 Polarization Applications II
   Michael W. Kudenov, College of Optical Sciences, The University of Arizona (United States)

8 Polarization in mm-wave Imaging
   Bruce E. Bernacki, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (United States)

9 Processing and Displaying Polarimetric Imagery
   Bradley M. Ratliff, Space Computer Corporation (United States)
Introduction

The broad appeal of polarization science was highlighted once again in the sixth meeting of our conference, *Polarization Science and Remote Sensing VI*. This year, authors hailed from ten countries and the presentations included a mix of contributions from academia, industry, and government laboratories. These enthusiastic researchers presented on applications of polarimetry that included the characterization of materials, the atmosphere, the ocean, and biological systems; the calibration, optimization, and metrology of polarimeters and related components; and the diverse considerations that go into the collection, processing, and display of polarimetric imagery. Contributing technologies spanned the ultraviolet, optical, and infrared wavelengths and, for the first time this year, extended to the millimeter-wave regime. The organizers of this conference and our sister conference, *Polarization: Measurement, Analysis, and Remote Sensing*, which will be meeting for the eleventh time in the spring of 2014 in Baltimore, are delighted to be the venue of choice for so many talented and prolific research professionals.

We are especially pleased to present in this volume, an invited paper by the 2013 recipient of the SPIE G.G. Stokes Award, José Jorge Gil from the University of Zaragoza, Spain. His presentation entitled, "Mathematical tools for the analysis and exploitation of polarimetric measurements," reviews how Mueller matrices may be decomposed into physically significant invariant quantities. We are grateful to Professor Gil for both his contributions to our conference and to the study of optical polarization. With the intent of establishing a new tradition, a similar invitation will be extended to future Stokes award winners when this conference convenes again in 2015.

Joseph A. Shaw
Daniel A. LeMaster