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*IPA Representative*

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To the U.S. Permafrost Community

It has been a new way of life for us as we all practice social distancing, self-isolation, and mask wearing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus has impacted the international permafrost community as well as USPA. The 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Permafrost, which was to be held in Lanzhou China in June, has been rescheduled for June, 2022. Most of us have been attending virtual meetings via Zoom, GoToMeeting, Skype, etc. Travel to conferences, meetings, and field activities has been greatly curtailed. The AGU Fall Meeting in San Francisco will be mostly virtual. Our Annual USPA Meeting also will be mostly virtual, but hosted from a location(s) of convenience to our Board members and others.

Planning is well underway for the 2021 IPA/USPA Regional Conference on Permafrost (RCOP) which is joint with ASCE's 19th International Conference on Cold Region Engineering (ICCRE) and to be held July 11-16, 2021 on the campus of the University of Colorado, Boulder. The conference website is up and running at <https://uspermafrost.org/21rcop/index.shtml>.

The call for abstracts of proceedings papers resulted in 55 acceptable abstracts as of June 29 and a couple more may be received before July 2. Deadline for actual paper submissions for the ASCE-produced proceedings is September 15. Abstracts for additional conference presentations are due in early Winter 2021. Fundraising to reduce costs of registration and other costs of the conference is underway. To date, we have sponsors in the categories of bronze, gold, and platinum. The organizers need help in seeking substantially more sponsors. See website and contact Tom Douglas or Treasurer Peppi Croft to contribute and/or help with fundraising. The RCOP Organizing Committee is seeking interested PYRN members to serve on the RCOP-ICCRE conference equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) committee. Interested members can contact Matthew Whitley, the US National PYRN Representative [mawhitley@alaska.edu](mailto:mawhitley@alaska.edu).

We are pleased to report that Dr. Larry Hinzman, former Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and past USPA President, is the new Director of the US Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) at the White House's Office of Science and Technology. The IARPC Permafrost Collaborative Team is soliciting permafrost-related research input for the next Five-Year U.S. Arctic Research Plan (2022-2027). Please send permafrost research requirements to Christina Schaedel: [Christina.Schaedel@nau.edu](mailto:Christina.Schaedel@nau.edu). You are invited to join the Monthly Team meetings organized by the Arctic Research Consortium of the United States.

The International Permafrost Association (IPA) Council held virtual meetings June 22-23, 2020 in place of the previously scheduled Lanzhou meetings. New USPA Board members Kevin Schaefer and Ed Yarmak participated as did Fritz Nelson, member of the IPA Executive Committee. We thank outgoing Tom Krzewinski for his 12 years of service as the USPA representative to the Council. The Council announced its Life-time Achievement award to Dr. Jerry Brown, Past President of the IPA (<https://ipa.arcticportal.org/news>). The formal award presentation is planned for RCOP-ICCRE in Boulder.

The PYRN General Assembly, chaired by President Helena Bergstedt, was held virtually June 23, 2020. Helena is currently spending a year at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Results of the Assembly will be found on the PYRN website.

The Membership Committee continues to seek new members. Our current total membership is 194. Since January we received 18 new individual members and four institutional and corporate members, many of which were based on 2019 commitments. We are waiting for some 50 current members to renew their 2020 memberships. New memberships and renewal memberships can be completed online: [https://www.uspermafrost.org/online\\_membership.shtml](https://www.uspermafrost.org/online_membership.shtml). The membership web page has been revised to reflect the current organizational mission and membership benefits.

The Committee on Communications continues to work with American Geosciences Institute and the Permafrost Monthly Alert (PMA). A special issue of PMA added 298 permafrost-related abstracts from the Fall 2019 AGU Annual Meeting.

USPA-PYRN Education Funds (UPEF) intends to offer Early Career members assistance through an application process: <https://uspermafrost.org/education/UPEF/> to attend AGU's virtual Fall Meeting 2020. USPA's Permafrost Engineering Education Program (PEEP) intends to underwrite the cost of paper submission/publication for up to five engineering students for RCOP.

In closing, on behalf of the USPA Board of Directors, I wish you a safe rest of the Arctic summer and Fall. The annual election will take place later this Fall. Nominations for President-Elect, Secretary, and General Member are welcomed.

John P. Zarling

President USPA 2020

**We thank our Members and Donors for their continued support!**

