



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As it enters its 40<sup>th</sup> year of existence, I find myself thinking about my past involvement in NACIS. My first meeting was in 1999 in Williamsburg, Virginia—Tom Patterson had invited me to talk about international boundaries—but I didn't start coming regularly until the 2008 meeting in Missoula, Montana, where I was hooked by the relaxed, social format in which cartography was discussed and ideas were shared. I learned a lot about my craft, made friends, and broadened my professional outreach in a convivial and unpretentious environment. And my affection for NACIS has continued to grow along with the organization itself. We're truly a Society that puts an emphasis on interpersonal relationships, and this (among other good reasons) makes me honored to serve as your President.

In this year of pandemic the world—and our Society—has had to make unprecedented decisions and changes in our lives. I'm proud that, despite the challenges, the cartographic community remains engaged. A great example of this is the *How to Do Map Stuff* event, a series of 26 live mapping workshops on April 29<sup>th</sup> that drew hundreds of viewers thirsty to learn cartographic tips and tricks. I give thanks and congratulations to NACIS member Daniel P. Huffman, who conceived and organized it, and to the presenters who offered the great content, which you can access [here](#).

Within NACIS, initiatives new and old are forging ahead. Keep an eye out for the T-shirt store opening on [nacis.org](http://nacis.org), where you can buy carto-themed shirts designed by your peers—or design your own. The highly anticipated fifth edition of *Atlas of Design* is due out later this year. Director of Operations Nick Martinelli, Executive Director Tom Patterson, and I are updating our website to make it easier to find things and to add more useful content. Nominations for the Corlis Benefideo Award are open and I encourage you to acknowledge people who exemplify imaginative cartography. And of course, our journal *Cartographic Perspectives* continues to publish top-notch articles, reviews, and other content.

I'd like to thank the people who contributed to the [great meeting](#) we had in Tacoma, Washington last October. We broke our attendance record with 473 people registered, including 271 at Practical Cartography Day (PCD)—more than half the total! The event organizers had to scramble to accommodate these larger than expected numbers, and we apologize to those attendees who had to stand in the back. So, big kudos to program co-chair Mamata Akella and leaders Elaine Guidero and Ross Thorn for organizing and executing PCD, and to all the presenters who made it such a success. And thanks to those who organize the social events: our Tacoma local coordinators Jim Thatcher and Gordon

Kennedy; Dennis McClendon, the host of Geodweeb Geopardy!; Claire Trainor for the Fun Run/Walk; and the coordinators for the popular Lunch Bunch. To all the volunteers who stepped up to make things run smoothly—session moderators, Map Gallery facilitators, registration desk workers and many others—you help make NACIS the vibrant, relevant and fun organization that it is.

Both at our meeting in Tacoma and in the responses to our post-meeting survey (thanks to all who filled that out!) we heard from our growing and diverse members about their concerns and recommendations, and your Board of Directors is working to address them. In particular, the newly formed Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee, under the Communications and Outreach Committee headed by Rosemary Wardley, has made progress on several fronts: (1) drafting a Diversity and Inclusion Statement to complement our existing [Code of Conduct](#); (2) reserving 20% of our travel grants for minority and underserved applicants; (3) expanding the role of the New Attendee Ambassador to better welcome and integrate first-time attendees. Your Board is also checking out potential future meeting sites in locations outside the United States, and sending notice that conference presentations in languages other than English will be welcome.

On May 29<sup>th</sup>, the NACIS Board voted to change our 2020 Annual Meeting from an in-person meeting to a virtual event. This decision was made to protect the health of our attendees and in acknowledgement of the difficulties of travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Annual Meeting organizers, led by Mamata Akella and Pat Kennelly, are stepping up to the challenges of this new operating environment and are very excited about the possibilities it affords. So, while I'm disappointed I won't be seeing many of you in person this fall, I encourage you to participate in what is sure to be a historic and dynamic Annual Meeting. Consult our website for [Annual Meeting](#) updates.

By unhappy coincidence, the Board's decision to go to a virtual meeting happened during protests over the tragic and brutal death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, the city in which we were to hold our meeting this year. In lieu of our physical presence there, NACIS has made donations to two organizations dedicated to supporting minority-owned businesses in Minnesota's Twin Cities impacted by both the pandemic and the protests.

Lastly, I want to thank once again all the volunteers who form the heart and soul of NACIS, and especially our Business Manager Susan Peschel, who has poured so much effort into making things run smoothly. And I encourage all of you to consider ways of contributing your time and talent to our Society; check out the website for ways you can do that.

Happy 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, NACIS!

Sincerely,

***Leo Dillon***  
NACIS President