



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In the months since my last letter, time has gone both very quickly and very slowly. I'm still sitting in my home office, staring at the same screen, in a kind of Groundhog Day in December. The year has been full of challenges of one sort or another for everyone, no matter where you live and no matter where you work or study. As I reflect on how I've handled my own challenges, one thing my mind keeps coming back to is how important community has been to me in getting through the year. Professionally, the NACIS membership makes up a big part of my community and networks, and I am very thankful and grateful to have had that community to turn to for support and commiseration. I'll draw your attention to a few ways that community has made a difference for me in the last few months.

Like me, some of you attended Virtual NACIS a few months ago in October. The Society's early experimentation with live streaming presentations, which began several years ago and was initiated for other reasons, turned out to be a prescient decision. It meant that both the meeting organizers and attendees had some experience with these technologies, and I think that this allowed them to move beyond the basics and create the best online meeting I've attended all year. Perhaps some of you feel the same way. Although, like many of you, I would have preferred to be able to attend the meeting in person, the virtual meeting really felt like a NACIS conference to me. The interactions I observed and participated in, both on Slack and at the social events, were the same great conversations I would have been having in person, with the added bonus of actually being able to hear the whole conversation at NACIS Night Out and not waking up with a hoarse voice from straining to make myself heard in a noisy room of cartographers! It was a few days of (almost) normality that I needed sorely, having at that point spent 110 days in lockdown where I live in Melbourne, Australia. I felt very grateful for the significant effort that the conference organizers, Mamata Akella and Pat Kennelly—with the support of the rest of the NACIS Board—put into making this a NACIS meeting like any other, even if in some ways it was unlike any other.

I am likewise grateful for all of the hard work that went into the crafting of the *Atlas of Design*. If you've ordered the most recent *Atlas of Design*, Volume 5, you will also have received a volume full of inspiration and delight by now, as I have. It is the latest instalment in a series edited by NACIS members, and many NACIS members are numbered among the contributors or members of the jury that selected the maps for the volume. I hope that for those of you who are in the thick of terrible COVID-19 outbreaks in the northern hemisphere winter are able to turn to that volume for distraction, pleasure, and dreaming of a return to a more normal existence.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank all of the people whose support makes it possible to produce *CP*. Firstly, there is the editorial team: Daniel Huffman (Assistant Editor); Jake Coolidge, Sarah Bell, Fritz Kessler, and Mark Denil (the section editors); and Sarah Battersby, Cynthia Brewer, Matt Dooley, Matthew Edney, Sara Fabrikant, Bernhard Jenny, Patrick Kennelly, Mark Monmonier, Ian Muehlenhaus, Michael Peterson, Anthony Robinson, Amy Rock, and Robert Roth (the Editorial Board). In particular, I would like to thank Sarah Bell for her two years of service as the Practical Cartographer's Corner Section Editor, as she will be stepping down from the role in 2021.

Secondly, there are the reviewers. In a time when there has been more work and fewer resources in many universities because of the shift to remote teaching and learning, it has become more challenging to find reviewers, so for these contributions, I am very grateful. The following people provided reviews of papers in the peer reviewed papers section:

Matt Beaty	Jeff Howarth	Anthony Robinson
Arzu Çöltekin	Laurent Jégou	Amy Rock
Jeremy Crampton	Bernie Jenny	Robert Roth
Craig Dalton	Fritz Kessler	Erik Steiner
Tiffany Earley-Spodoni	Scott Lieske	daan Strebe
Alison Feeney	Sebastian Meier	Denis White
Carolyn Fish	Mark Monmonier	Travis White
Sarah Goodwin	Ian Muehlenhaus	Cathy Yinghui
	Michael Peterson	

In *CP 96*, you will find two PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES. In the first, Jonathan Nelson and Alan MacEachren present a design study that captures and documents the design process that was used to develop a cartographic interface that can be used to interact with a very large bicycling dataset. Their study provides a window into their development and evaluation process, which spanned both industry and academic settings. In the second article, Ate Poorthuis and colleagues introduce Florence, a new JavaScript-based, open-source framework for teaching web-based cartography and data visualization. This framework allows a heightened focus on cartographic theory, rather than requiring students to acquire some knowledge of software engineering in order to be able to use one of the dozens of different web mapping platforms used in industry.

Charles Preppernau introduces us to his technique for making a normal map in the PRACTICAL CARTOGRAPHER'S CORNER. Maybe this is not the kind of normality we are all yearning for, but it's a kind of normality we can at least access in this moment. I encourage you to check out his article.

In VISUAL FIELDS, Jen Mapes and Sara Koopman provide us with some insights into how they developed an interactive map, entitled *Mapping May 4th*, as well as a wall-sized print map, which hangs in the Kent Historical Society. Both maps tell the story of a Vietnam War protest that was held at Kent State University, and resulted in the deaths of four of the protestors.

Garrett Dash Nelson introduces the Leventhal Map & Education Center's digital exhibition, *Bending Lines: Maps and Data From Distortion to Deception* in CARTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS. This exhibition, originally planned to be held in the library's exhibition spaces,

had to be pivoted to an online-first exhibition once the library closed to the public because of COVID-19. The exhibition explores the mapmaking process and attempts to help the public develop an appreciation for how cartographic decisions shape the resulting maps. This is done through an examination of both historical persuasive maps and a series of contemporary maps specifically commissioned for the exhibition with the aim of showing how the same dataset can result in maps telling different stories in the hands of different cartographers.

*CP96* includes two REVIEWS of atlases produced by the Guerrilla Cartography group. Abe Parrish reviews *Water: An Atlas*, while Nat Case reviews *Food: An Atlas*. To find out more about the Guerrilla Cartography group, if you missed it, see the [Visual Fields contribution in CP 94](#), written by founder Darin Jensen. Providing an interesting counterpoint to reviews of two atlases, Alison Olivierre and Charla Burnett team up to discuss the merits of *This Is Not an Atlas: A Global Collection of Counter-Cartographies*.

Several volumes have recently been published about W. E. B DuBois's Paris Exhibition at the 1900 World's Fair, including [one that was reviewed in CP 93](#). Krystle Harrell reviews an edited volume, *Black Lives 1900: W. E. B. Du Bois at the Paris Exposition*, whose chapters examine the historical context of the exhibition. In his review, Glenn Humphries argues that we need more monographs that celebrate individual maps in the way Hongping Annie Nie's monograph, *The Selden Map of China: A New Understanding of the Ming Dynasty* does. Rounding out the reviews section, Vincenza Ferrara provides an opinion on *Focus on Geodatabases in ArcGIS Pro*, which may be of interest to those of you who are making or are contemplating making the switch to Esri's latest platform.

Let's hope 2021 brings an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. An unexpected benefit of Virtual NACIS 2020 was that it enabled participation from international locations and brought new members to the Society. I hope we can use what we've learned in these challenging times to build a stronger, more connected cartographic community worldwide.

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