

# cartographic perspectives

Number 41, Winter 2002

## *in this issue*

### FEATURED ARTICLES

Thinking Philosophically in Cartography: Toward A Critical  
Politics in Mapping 4  
*Jeremy W. Crampton*

Frank H. Galbraith's Railway Mail Service Maps, 1897 24  
*Virginia W. Mason*

Participatory Mapping of Disabled Access 44  
*Rob Kitchin*

### REVIEWS

The Cambridge Star Atlas 55  
*Reviewed by Edith Punt*

The Map Library in the New Millennium 57  
*Reviewed by Joanne M. Perry*

### MAP LIBRARY BULLETIN BOARD

The Ohio State University Libraries Map Room 59  
*Steve Rogers*

Digital Map and Geospatial Information Center 61  
Princeton University Library  
*Tsering Wangyal Shawa*

Map and Geographic Information Center 63  
Centennial Science and Engineering Library  
University of New Mexico  
*Mary Wyant*

## *Letter from the Editor*

Dear Members of NACIS,

It is late October it's snowing in Duluth my skis are waxed and sharpened so why am I sitting here at this computer? Oh, that's right, another issue of *Cartographic Perspectives* is "rolling off the presses". Another column from the editor has been requested. With my Titanium PowerBook in hand (on lap?), I type. With nearly six issues of *CP* published since I became editor, I have come to appreciate more than ever the amount of work (and determination) that goes into creating an academic publication. In addition to me, *CP* enjoys the incredible efforts of 6 other editors, 15 editorial board members, and a player to be named later. I want to recognize the efforts of these 22 people, especially the work of Jim Anderson and Lou Cross (i.e., the player named later) who put so much time and energy into the actual production of *Cartographic*

*(continued on page 3)*

**NACIS WEB SITE**  
**[www.nacis.org](http://www.nacis.org)**

*Perspectives*. Thank you to each of you for your work and dedication in producing *CP*. It certainly makes my job a whole lot easier.

This issue brings together three diverse papers, representing three different perspectives in cartography. The first paper *Thinking Philosophically in Cartography: Toward a Critical Politics of Mapping*, forces us to ask “what are the conditions of thinking in cartography that we can both see the shape of that thinking, to see it as it is, and therefore to begin to see how it might be otherwise”. Another way to ask this question, I suppose, is to ask how has our thinking in cartography been constrained by historical precedent, by current practices, and how does this limit our collective perspectives for future cartographies? This paper should force us out of our comfort zone, or at least against the boundaries of that zone.

The next paper, *Frank H. Galbraith’s Railway Mail Service Maps, 1897* presents what I see as one of the first maps to use icons as part of the “user interface” to geographic information, so to speak. Galbraith used pictures representative of the political and social culture of the late 1800’s as visual mnemonics to help railway mail service workers learn the complex mail distribution network. This paper presents a wonderful story of the reasons for the development of various icons used, and how the maps did in fact help the railway service workers learn the environment.

The last paper, *Participatory Mapping of Disabled Access* is a discourse on empowering with maps. It provides a valuable account of the process that was used by disabled residents of Newbridge in Ireland. These residents used maps to document areas in Newbridge where barriers to access to the built environment exist for them. The

results of this participatory mapping project were used to argue for changes in the design of built environments, as well as suggestions for modifications to existing environments, resulting in better access for the disabled.

As I reflect on these three papers, I recall a session at the NACIS meetings in Columbus titled **Future Directions: NACIS and the Cartography and GIS Professions** where the discussion centered on “what vision should NACIS have?” From the panelists’ presentations, and from the comments and questions from the audience, suggested that we have some sort of problem. I thought “hmmmm”. Of course, those of you who were at the session and heard my comments know what my “hmmmm” is all about. I won’t tell here the entire joke that I told in the session in Columbus, but I will share the punch line that is, “I am already across the lake”. So now, what could I possibly mean by that? Let me explain.

I look at NACIS as being a pretty healthy organization. Membership is up. We have a very diverse membership. Where else can you find a map librarian, a geo-visualizatoinist (hey, a new word), a practical cartographer, an analytical cartographer, a statistician, a GISographer (another new word!), a historical cartographer, a cognitive cartographer, a critical/social cartographer, and a Rabbi at the same banquet table? (There really wasn’t a Rabbi, it just seemed to fit). The only place I have encountered this is at the NACIS meetings. We are a more than tolerant group we are an accepting group one that listens to all view points, is supportive of others’ views and philosophies, and understands the importance of plurality in the discipline of cartography. Somehow we have made it work. So when I look at future directions for NA-

CIS, I guess I don’t see it as a call to solve any perceived problems with cartography, GIS, and NACIS. Instead, I see the future of NACIS as one that builds on our success of being a diverse group that recognizes the importance of each member, regardless of their cartographic bent. So, instead of asking, “how do you get across the lake?” we should see that we are already across the lake we don’t need to make that metaphorical swim. This issue of *Cartographic Perspectives* is a good example of our diverse organization.

On another note, this issue marks the beginning of *CP* having an official copyright. Each issue of *CP* will be registered with the Library of Congress, and will benefit from all the rights and protections under copyright law. Both the NACIS and *CP* Boards believe that this is a positive step for *CP* and that it will raise *CP* to a higher level as a publication. This, of course, transfers copyrights from authors to NACIS, and any reprints of published articles are parts of articles will require written permission for duplication. This will ensure that *CP* will become more visible as a publication outlet.

As always, I welcome all comments about *CP*.

Warmest Regards,

Scott Freundschuh