



cartographic perspectives

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Members of NACIS,

Another issue of *Cartographic Perspectives* comes to fruition. Jim Anderson has requested another editorial column; so here I sit, on a bus with my son's soccer team and 20 other soccer parents. We are on our way to Elk River, MN (a 2 hour and 45 minute ride from Duluth) for yet another soccer game. It is partly cloudy, about 79 degrees, and no one thought to bring any beer or wine coolers...geesh. It's gonna be a long night. Anyway, too much information, right? Call it editor's privilege...<grin>.

Okay, back to *Cartographic Perspectives* (I'll try to stay on task...forgive me if I wander). First off, let me provide a bit of an update on the status of *CP*. It has been a long building process to get *CP* to the point where it is today. Like other "cartography" journals, *CP* has been behind schedule in publications. Over the past two years, the editorial board has been

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successful in building a “pool” of manuscripts that are at various stages of review and publication. This pool is critical for *CP* to get back on publication schedule. It also speaks well for the recent changes in *CP* that have resulted more submissions.

A few years ago, the Cartography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers talked at great length about changing its name. These discussions were fostered by the Board members, which, if I remember correctly, included Jeremy Crampton, Liz Nelson, Charlie Rader, Ann Goulette, Frank Boscoe, Anna Williams, Ute Dymon and myself. The reason for the discussion was that some members of the specialty group expressed to the board that the current name was not inclusive enough...that cartography was only part of what they did...and that visualization included cartography among other kinds of endeavors (e.g., animation, multimedia, 3D, virtual reality). The discussion fostered two position papers written by two of the specialty group members: Jeremy Crampton was pro, and Keith Clarke was con. The name of the specialty group was never changed, but the forces behind visualization remained.

Relax, I do not intent to resurrect that discussion here (is that a collective sigh of relief I heard?). What I wanted to talk about here are some discussions we’ve had in our department regarding courses, and the names of proposed courses. At present, we have a series of courses that include:

Introduction to Maps and
Cartographic Theory
Map Design and Graphic
Methods
Advanced Cartography
Introduction to GIScience
Advanced GIScience
Environmental Applications in
GIScience
Resource Management in

GIScience
Introduction to Remote Sensing
and Image Interpretation

Sounds like standard fare, right? The discussions we have had include changing the very structure and content of our course offerings, as well as changing the names of the courses to (1) reflect some current trends in GIScience, and to (2) include the broader perspective that visualization brings to the design of spatial “things”. Here is the list of courses that have been proposed:

Introduction to Maps and
Mapping Technologies
Map Design and GEO
Visualization
Multimedia and Animated
Maps
Earth Imagery
Digital Imaging and Image
Analysis
Introduction to GIScience
Advanced GIScience
Resource Management and
Policy in GIScience
Participatory Mapping in
GIScience
Environmental Applications in
GIScience

What’s different in this list of courses? Well, I am certain that many of you noticed that the word “Cartography” is nowhere in this list. At the same time, the word “map” or “mapping” is peppered throughout, as well as the term GIScience. Hmm...

This curriculum change is in the proposal stage at this time. Many discussions will take place over the next year, some related to the financial implications of this new curriculum, and some related to a huge change in how we think about our role as educators about many aspects of spatial information. It certainly has us thinking about “who we are”. The people in our department who are having these discussions include a

water resource biologist, a physical geographer, a cultural ecologist and myself. We all have different perspectives on GIScience and cartography...the proposed program is a collective view, one that has been reached by consensus.

So, what do you think? Is this a “not so good” thing? Are other programs looking at similar changes? In spite of the fact that our organizations embrace their names (the Cartography Specialty Group as a case in point), the impact of visualization can be seen in our program, and I suspect in others. Is this incorrect thinking?

I am tossing this out for discussion. I welcome any comments or views on this. In fact, I would propose that we have an opinion column about this in a future issue of *CP*. Anyone up for the task?

Warmest regards,

Scott Freundschuh
Editor