



LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITORS

Members of the NACIS Mapping Family:

It is truly an exciting time to be a mapmaker. Today, we are afforded with an unprecedented volume of geographically referenced information, with estimates indicating that 80% of all newly assembled information have a geospatial signature. Similarly, we have witnessed an explosion of technologies developed to make use of this information, from desktop- or browser-based software that support and enhance the workflows of cartographers to mobile applications that have transformed the way in which everyday users engage with maps (and perhaps even how they engage with the world around them). It can be argued that there has never been more interest in mapping than now, with a variety of both formal and informal cartographic organizations, along with their associated meetings and publications, gaining significant traction worldwide.

This excitement is echoed by the current transitional phase of NACIS. As stewards of Cartography, NACIS has a responsibility to reach out to these nascent activities—to build connections across the increasingly fragmented cartographic community—in order to promote their messages and aid in their success. Further, we have a responsibility as a society to disseminate the collective body of cartographic knowledge accrued during NACIS's thirty years of existence for use by all mapmakers, regardless of their affiliation. NACIS remains committed to continued evaluation of the services offered to our membership to ensure we are fulfilling our mission.

It is in this context that we present the second of two special issues of *Cartographic Perspectives* distributed openly in digital form. The release of these two special issues comes at an important time in the history of *CP*, during which fundamental changes to its delivery and structuring are being explored in order to ensure that it remains an outlet for cutting-edge cartographic research and practice. The readership survey conducted by Amy Griffin and Fritz Kessler in 2009 identified several ways to improve *CP*'s content. The articles presented in the two special digital issues (#64 & #66) are illustrative of the new formats and styles recommended in the readership feedback. We plan to expand upon these experimental issues over the next year as we continue to explore new possibilities for *CP*.

The 2009-2010 NACIS Board was quick to identify the benefits to our membership, and to the field of Cartography, identified in the readership survey and enacted changes to *CP* in two stages. Stemming from the input from the readership survey, and the success of the first special digital issue, the switch to a digital medium was approved at the 2010 Spring Board Meeting held in Madison, WI. Advantages of a digital journal include expanded options for displaying our visual work (e.g., full color prints, no size/resolution constraints), the ability to access interactive maps and other web-based content, and a wider exposure of ideas generated within the NACIS community. The NACIS Board is mindful of the subset of members that still desire a printed version and will continue to offer a serialized, bounded version of each *CP* issue on-demand.

As the approval of digital *CP* generated more questions than answers, a committee was created at the Spring 2010 Board Meeting to define formally the transition mechanism to the digital medium. The Digital Transition Committee contained a mixture of academic and professional NACIS members to represent the diverse interests of NACIS and included Tanya Buckingham, Lou Cross, Gordon Kennedy, Pat Kennelly, Fritz Kessler, David Lambert, Margaret Pearce, Susan Peschel, Brandon Plewe, and Rob Roth. Committee members worked judiciously over the Summer of 2010 to define the vision for digital *CP* and presented their recommendations to the NACIS Board in August 2010. After discussion and revision, the recommendations were ratified unanimously prior to the 2010 Fall Board Meeting. Ratified decisions included continued provision of a print version of *CP* upon request (as described above), continued serialization into three issues, provision of an HTML web pre-print of articles upon acceptance (refereed articles can be made available online within 4-6 weeks of submission!), provision of moderated message boards for each article to facilitate two-way communication between the author and NACIS community, and creation of additional *CP* article formats that leverage the digital medium and respond to feedback from the readership survey. However, there is one fundamental change that requires special attention here: the exploration of a move to an open access model.

This year we hope you will join us as we lead the field in an experiment to convert our journal to an open access, online publication. A move to an open access journal carries with it many strategic advantages that will maintain *CP* as an outlet that encourages communication and coordination among cartographic thinkers. It is almost assured that the transition will increase readership, as anyone with an Internet connection can now access its contents. We expect the transition to increase the number and quality of contributions to the journal, as the wider circulation should result in greater opportunity for citation (for academic articles) and application (for practical articles); the ability to have peer-reviewed content publicly available within 4-6 weeks of submission is something that is not offered by competing Cartography journals, or really any other journal in Geography. Finally, and most importantly, a switch to open access is simply the right thing to do from an ethical standpoint, as David DiBiase so eloquently emphasized in his position paper leading the first special digital issue. The open access model is congruous to the mapgiving movement within NACIS (rather than data or designs, we are giving our knowledge) and provides an additional way in which we can build connections with and facilitate the success of other mapping communities. Thus, we view the transition to open access important not just for the continued health of *CP*, but for the mission of NACIS as a whole.

It is in the context of these fast-paced, but well thought-through, changes to *Cartographic Perspectives* that we introduce the second special digital issue. The articles presented in this special issue represent the integration of past *CP* traditions and emerging *CP* possibilities. The first two articles parallel *CP*'s transition from print to digital, as both describe topics with analog roots, but new digital opportunities. This special issue opens with a seminal introduction to GeoDesign by Michael Goodchild, a topic he states that has its origins in the use of transparent map overlays to support decision making some forty years ago, although one that is still lacking robust digital technologies today. Goodchild's article is followed by a piece from Daniel Huffman that revisits the waterlining technique, which includes digital design suggestions for the age-old cartographic depiction of coastlines.

The second pair of articles summarizes the unique design constraints and solutions for two cutting-edge cartographic projects, one digital and one print. Tim Wallace discusses the design and development of the recently launched *University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum Map*, an interactive, web-based application that leverages Web 2.0 technologies and volunteered geographic information to promote the Arboretum. This is followed by a discussion of work completed by Michael Hermann and Margaret Pearce to map Champlain's early travels through Canada, a print product that integrates European, Native, and *Cartographic Perspectives* to produce a rich narrative of his explorations. Together, this pair of articles illustrates the potential for continued innovation in both digital and print mapmaking, and thus the need for *CP* to continue to be an active outlet for both.

The third pair of articles is indicative of the diversity of NACIS, discussing topics identified as important by key subsets of members in the readership survey, but that perhaps have been underrepresented in past issues of *Cartographic Perspectives*. Contributing to scholarship in map librarianship, Abraham Kaleo Parrish provides an overview of the *George Washington's American Atlas* collection recently acquired by the Yale Map Department, a set of 43 map sheets formerly in the possession of Washington himself; as with future issues of *CP*, the contents of this atlas are being made freely available in digital format for public consumption. This article is followed by a piece from Hans van der Maarel and Derek Tonn offering practical advice to fledgling freelance cartographers, covering topics such as business organization/legalities, product pricing, balancing freelance work with other activities, business focus, and collaboration with other freelancers.

The fourth pair of articles presents an example of the new *On the Horizon* section recommended by the Digital Transition Committee to leverage the digital medium. This new section provides introductory and advanced tutorials on emerging topics in dynamic & web-based mapping and is a complement to the traditional *CP* tutorials included in the *Practical Cartographer's Corner*. Andy Woodruff presents an introduction to map browsing, providing a code library and tutorial for implementing multiple forms of panning and zooming in interactive, web-based maps using the Adobe Flash development environment. Following this piece, Kiichi Takeuchi and Patrick Kennelly present a tutorial for generating a mobile mapping application using GeoGears, a customizable application developed by the authors that simplifies development of iPhone mapping applications; GeoGears is openly available for use and extension, again mirroring the transition of *CP* to open access.

The final articles present examples of the new *In the Marginalia* section recommended by the Digital Transition Committee to make portions of *CP* more magazine-like, a common comment in the readership survey. This section will include a cycle of three articles, each printed once a year: an update on the status of NACIS from the newly created Communication Director position, a highlight of the annual Student Web Map and Poster Competition winners, and an interview with a long-time NACIS member, using the same set of ten questions each year; examples of the latter two are provided in this special issue. Summaries of the 2009 Student Web Map and Poster Competition are provided by David Heyman and Patrick Kennelly, showcasing the award winning maps. Importantly, Patrick Kennelly also announces the creation of a third student competition: the *Cartographic Perspectives* Student Peer-Reviewed Paper Competition (with a purse of \$1350!). The final article included in the special issue is an informal interview with Dr. Cindy Brewer, one of NACIS's longest tenured members and one of *CP*'s most prolific contributors. In the interview, we get to hear about Cindy's origins as a cartographer (scans of pen-and-ink maps from her undergraduate classes are included!), some fun stories about her experiences with NACIS and NACIS members, and her outlook for the future of Cartography.

We close by emphasizing the fundamental role of *CP* to the vitality of NACIS. *CP* affords the opportunity to extend and formalize the conversations initiated at the NACIS Annual Meeting, allowing us to continue to teach each other how best to make and use maps. It is an important record of our evolution as a society, archiving the focal topics and perspectives of our past and suggesting alternative possibilities for our future. It is an important way that we build connections with other cartographic communities that are not yet formal members of the NACIS community. Most importantly, *CP* is, and should always be, a reflection of the interests, abilities, and concerns of the NACIS membership. *Cartographic Perspectives* is yours, and we hope equally that its pages always contain material in which you are interested and that you always feel welcomed as a contributor. Your unique cartographic perspective deserves to be heard!

We appreciate the feedback on *CP* you have provided that ultimately led to the aforementioned changes, we thank the authors of this special issue for their excellent contributions, and we encourage continued suggestions to make *CP* a true reflection of breadth within Cartography.

Tanya MA Buckingham
and Robert E. Roth