



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings all!

It is my pleasure to have an opportunity in this space to highlight some of the activities of our NACIS organization in the last year and offer a modest vision for the upcoming year.

Thanks to the strong leadership the organization has had over the last two years (in particular, Presidents Margaret Pearce and Tanya Buckingham), I can confidently say that we are growing, our membership is more active than ever, and we have a wealth of projects in the hopper for our future.

As most of you are reading this on a digital device, you are witness to *Cartographic Perspectives* making its transition to this new format that is more immediate, more accessible, and more extensible than our previous print-only journal. This ahead-of-the-curve development positions *CP* as a sustainable and creative model for other journals to follow, and we are as excited as you are to see it continue to innovate and blossom with creative content. As many of you know, this process was begun over two years ago, and it has been through the diligent and tireless work of editors Pat Kennelly and Rob Roth that this has been made possible. Of course, we hope your initial impressions are positive, but we are all excited to see how your feedback can shape the journal into something that goes well beyond where we are now. Please let us know what you think!

This digital open-access transition is part of a larger vision we have for developing organizational sustainability and continuity as we grow and adapt. Efforts in this area will impact the NACIS Board as we document and organize our operating procedures and policies, strengthening the definitions of our fledgling executive roles, and modernizing our internal communications routines and data management systems. The membership voted unanimously at the business meeting in Fall 2011 to create a “Vice President Elect” position on the Board to assist the Vice President/Program Chair and help ease the steep learning curve for running an increasingly complex conference. These actions are incremental steps toward an organizational continuity plan that allows us to operate with stability while still depending on a modest income from membership dues and the volunteer service of our Board of Directors.

We are also undergoing a gradual upgrade of our online systems that better integrates our identity and helps facilitate the conference organization. Cartotalk.org (our online forum) and nacis.org (our primary website) are both going through a redesign process, and the release of cartographicperspectives.org brings another site online under our umbrella administration. To better serve our community, it is essential that we invest in technology and practices to effectively manage our membership accounts across these three entities.

Several additional efforts are in the works that build on the value of the conference but extend well beyond the time and place of the event. The *Atlas of Design*, an effort led by Tim Wallace, will be a printed book due to be available in the fall that will highlight the brilliant design work of our community. The Initiative for Cartographic Education, led by Daniel Huffman, is a new effort to advance the practice of teaching cartography by bringing educators together. Both of these efforts highlight a modestly expanding role that NACIS seeks to play in creating resources that support our discipline and profession more broadly.

Our annual conference continues to be the primary focus of our efforts and the defining feature of our organization. NACIS 2011 in Madison was the largest gathering ever, with over 300 attendees and 150 presentations by leading industry professionals, public servants, and academic scholars. The conference highlighted an expanding definition of cartography and the fresh interest in the field by artists, urban designers, and web developers. And not surprisingly, there was a strong emphasis on technology and the diversity of formats and functions it enables. NACIS will continue to provide a forum these interests and the creative people that represent them—our strength over 30 years has been to encourage evolving cartographic practice while maintaining a basic value for sustaining our discipline's traditions.

At our core, NACIS is sustained by a people-driven culture with an ethos of openness. It is in this spirit that we announce a new occasional award titled “The Corlis Benefideo Award for Imaginative Cartography” that recognizes an individual's collected works as having an exemplary quality of “triggering an imaginative reaction.” The award, first put forward by Nat Case, is named after the fictional cartographer in Barry Lopez's *The Mappist*—a great read, incidentally, if you haven't seen it.

And, speaking of Oregonians—we look towards hosting you for another stimulating conference this year in Portland, Oregon (October 17–19, 2012). Neil Allen and Matthew Hampton are putting together an exceptional conference that promises to capture the growing enthusiasm and interest in NACIS and cartography.

In 2013, mark your calendars for Greenville, South Carolina for beer, banjos, barbeque, and maps.

—erik