



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am very proud to preside in these auspicious times for NACIS. We are riding high on the momentum of two successive annual meetings with record-setting attendance and participation. And not just at the meetings, maps are at an all-time high in relevance and utility in our daily lives too. In this Age of Utility, it is ever so important that we as a society continue to facilitate map accessibility, practice map aesthetics, and educate geoprofessionals and the public in graphic literacy. I will champion this mission in leading the initiatives planned before me by the outstanding leadership from recent past-presidents Erik Steiner and Tanya Buckingham. Their groundwork in outlining procedures and pioneering knowledge-continuity tools has created an unprecedented atmosphere for productivity. In the coming year, your board of directors will help me work toward broader stability for NACIS and added benefits to you, our members.

We will continue to modernize and integrate the three primary conduits of the NACIS body; Membership (nacis.org), Study and Practice (*Cartographic Perspectives*), and our Public Forum (cartotalk.com). Very soon work will begin on modernizing the design of the nacis.org website to more centralize all our member activities and benefits. *Cartographic Perspectives* (CP) recently lead the modernizing charge with making recent volumes open-access. In the near future, all back issues of CP will also be available in this form. The most recent leader in modernizing NACIS is Cartotalk. Not only has the forum gotten a facelift, but functional enhancements were made to the management toolbox as well.

On the nearest horizon is a call for nominations. I am pleased to be serving during the inaugural year of the *Corlis Benefideo Award for Imaginative Cartographies*. The award's namesake pays homage to an enviable, cartographic talent in Barry Lopez's short story "The Mappist." Since we are a collective of map professionals, it only seems natural that we acknowledge others for their contributions to our profession. Please contemplate the creative cartographic influences in your life and who is responsible for them. Please visit the NACIS website to learn more or send nominations directly to cb@nacis.org.

At the recent annual meeting in Portland we unveiled the *Atlas of Design*. The brainchild of Tim Wallace and Daniel Huffman, this first edition was well-received

and wildly successful in that we sold out at an unanticipated rate. Reprinting a second edition of this first volume will happen soon, and the discounted price is one of the membership benefits that we intend to continue. Such success encourages us and, we hope, future volunteers to help publish subsequent volumes in the years ahead.

All the while our charge of producing a quality annual meeting will always be purposeful. In particular, this year's program in Greenville, South Carolina will be the first one produced using dual program chairs in the vice president and vice president-elect. Such reinforcement will add resources and creativity that will provide you with the eventful conference opportunities you have come to expect. I anxiously look forward to seeing you there no matter which side of the microphone you choose.

All of these initiatives, and more, would not have been possible without the perpetual energy of volunteers that NACIS attracts and fosters. Most of this enthusiasm is typically directed internally. The last part of the NACIS body that I will address is the outstretched hand of each member. Outreach is an often overlooked part of our busy lifestyles. You will be surprised at how much easier public speaking becomes when you, the map expert, repeatedly talk about the things you know best, maps. Personally, I seek out opportunities to educate others about what I do. From Rotary Clubs, to Soroptomists, to Cub Scouts, to grade schools, to university classrooms, there are multitudes of gatherings to tell people about what you do and why it matters. The artifacts of our professions are interesting to most, and even more so once you contribute your cartographic perspective. My own challenge in the next year is to keep NACIS on the upward path by managing your elected volunteers on the board of directors. To further help us, my challenge to you is to reach out to some organization in your community by volunteering to talk about your profession. Not only will you have bridged the gap between your profession and your community, but you will also have bridged the gap between being just a part of a society and taking an active role in shaping it.

In Maps We Trust,

Neil H. Allen