



—by Aileen Buckley and Eric Anderson

The Cartographic and Geographic Information Society (CaGIS) sponsored its sixteenth AutoCarto conference this summer. The highly successful and extremely interesting AutoCarto 2006 was held in Vancouver, Washington, from June 26 to 28 in conjunction with three International Cartographic Association (ICA) commission meetings, as well as the Summer Assembly of the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS).

The ICA commissions on Map Projections, Generalization and Multiple Representation, and Visualization and Virtual Environments held full-day workshops on June 25, the day preceding the opening of the AutoCarto conference. The UCGIS Summer Assembly began directly after AutoCarto's closing plenary on Wednesday morning.

The venue was the beautiful Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, just across the Columbia River flowing from Portland, Oregon. Located near the Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood and only about half an hour's drive from downtown Portland, the setting was ideal, and the Pacific Northwest was as beautiful as ever in the early summer.

During the AutoCarto conference, over 50 papers were presented to an international audience of over 100; a poster session allowed attendees to exchange ideas and information on a more informal basis. A strong international attendance added to the excellent turnout of researchers and academics. Participants came from various U.S. and international universities, and there was considerable representation from U.S. and other national government agencies, as well as researchers from private industry. Overseas guests



Heathman Lodge

Photos by Keith Clarke, unless otherwise specified



CaGIS officers Liz Nelson (center) and Dalia Varanka help David DiBiase and other attendees get registered



Dr. Stephen Guptill delivers the opening address  
[Photo by Eric Anderson]

hailed from Canada to Europe, and all the way to Australia. The paper topics included current research on web mapping, generalization, and



Eric Anderson, Stephen Guptill, and David Cowen reconnect at the poster exhibit

algorithm development, along with retrospective looks at the evolution of digital cartography and geographic information systems.

CaGIS is working to get all papers posted online at their website ([www.cartogis.org](http://www.cartogis.org)). Selected papers will be published in the official journal of CaGIS, *Cartography and Geographic Information Science*.

The excellent program was organized by Francis Harvey and Rex Cammack on behalf of CaGIS. The scale and pace of the sessions allowed for substantial dialogue after paper presentations and during breaks. This continued the AutoCarto tradition of fostering interaction among the research communities from academic, public sector, and private sector organizations.

The opening keynote by Dr. Steve Guptill, Director of the U.S. Geological Survey's Center of Excellence for Geospatial Information Science, was entitled "Charting the Geospatial Transition: From Gerber Plotters to Google Earth." Not only was the talk an intriguing retrospective of technologies and programs at the federal level, but it illustrated the continuing pressure to save costs by reducing human involvement in the cartographic process.

The closing plenary by William Mackaness of the University of Edinburgh, titled "Automated Cartography in a Bush of Ghosts," was a compelling talk that challenged listeners to consider whether we have properly understood what automated cartography is trying to achieve and encouraged them to continue to evolve their ideas about maps, their uses and meanings, as well as the context in which they are used. Look for Dr. Mackaness' paper to be published in an upcoming

issue of the *Cartography and Geographic Information Science* journal.

On a more relaxed note, a reception, sponsored by ESRI, was held the first night of the conference to allow attendees to get to know each other and get caught up with colleagues from all over the world. The capstone of the conference for many was a field trip to Mount St. Helens to see how the mountain ecosystem has restored itself in the fifteen years following the devastating eruption on May 18, 1980. Although the eruption lasted 9 hours, Mount St. Helens and the surrounding landscape were dramatically changed within moments. It is incredible to see how life has been renewed and how parts of the ecosystem actually were rejuvenated because of the event.



Program organizer Francis Harvey helps Dr. William Mackaness prepare to give his closing address

In summary, AutoCarto 2006 was a tremendous success! It remains a unique and excellent venue that brings together international researchers and practitioners in cartography and GIScience to talk about the challenges that lie at the interface of these two important research areas. CaGIS will continue to sponsor the series and is already in the planning stages for the next AutoCarto which will be held in 2008.

The organizer of the 2008 AutoCarto is Dr. Keith Clarke of UC Santa Barbara. If you are interested in participating in the conference organization, please contact Dr. Clarke at [kclarke@geog.edu](mailto:kclarke@geog.edu).

*We hope to see you at AutoCarto 2008!*