

CaGIS president outlines goals

HALF of the 2007 CaGIS board is composed of women—Elisabeth Nelson is the editor of the CaGIS journal; Elizabeth Wentz, an officer of the society for more than two years, has been working on developing a CaGIS membership program; Jean McKendry joined the board this year and has already become the board's rep on legislative issues; and Aileen Buckley, a devoted officer for years and organizer of the highly successful CaGIS Map Design Competition, chairs the CaGIS board in 2007. With a composition of nine, the CaGIS board is split between four women and five men—Alan Mikuni (2007 vice chair), Douglas Vandegraft (outgoing chair), Kirk Eby (secretary/treasurer), Robert Edsall (new officer who has been tasked with coordinating the effort to update the popular Careers in Cartography and GIS brochure), and Gregory Allord (re-elected). With Dalia Varanka and Doug Vandegraft representing the society on issues within the ACSM Congress, CaGIS has five women actively involved in furthering its mission and goals. Is the increase in women elected to serve as CaGIS officers a coincidence? Most likely not. The number of women choosing careers in the field of cartography and GIScience is rising—and, they see a need to become involved in the national organization that represents their growing profession. For CaGIS, the trend has provided further impetus to target women in its 2007 membership drive.

In an interview for the ACSM Bulletin, Dr. Aileen Buckley, current president of CaGIS, talks about the relationships between technology and professionalism in the cartography and GIScience fields and shares some of the experiences she gained working to further develop CaGIS as a premier, national professional organization for cartographers and GIS professionals.

ACSM BULLETIN: How long have you been involved in CaGIS, and what convinced you to run for the highest office?

BUCKLEY: I have long been involved in many of our professional organizations, starting with induction into the Gamma Theta Upsilon (the Geography Honor Society) when I was an undergraduate in 1981. That may have started me on this path of service, since the next year I served as our chapter president. I have also served on the boards of a number of other organizations, including the Association of American Geographers' Cartography Specialty Group and Geographic Information Systems and Science Specialty Group. At this time, I am also a member of the U.S. National Committee to the ICA, and I serve on the board of the AAG-CSG. In addition, I am a member of the North American Cartographic Information Society, American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, Canadian Cartographic Association, and British Cartographic Society. But



CaGIS board in St. Louis, March 2007. Clockwise from lower right: Alan Mikuni, Liz Nelson, Aileen Buckley, Rob Edsall, Jean McKendry, and Doug Vandegraft.


the organization I have served on the board the longest has been CaGIS; I was first elected to the board in 2001.

ACSM BULLETIN: Traditional cartography and GIS ... commonalities and differences?

BUCKLEY: There are many directions I could take to answer this question. If we look at the practice of GIS and cartography there is increased fusion there. It is hard for cartographers not to use GIS—at the very least to gather and manage the data used on the maps they make. And it is hard for a GIS user to avoid the use of the software to make maps. With regard to software, the distinctions are also becoming less clear. For example, the latest version of ArcGIS includes some Illustrator-like tools for map making. So the lines dividing "traditional cartography" and "GIS" are so hard to draw that it is difficult to answer a question about exactly how they are similar or different.

ACSM BULLETIN: Which issues would you like CaGIS to tackle under your leadership?

BUCKLEY: My goals include continued and increased support for our current members and recruitment of new members. To increase our support for our members, CaGIS is working hard on our new web site (www.cartogis.org) with new content and services; getting back issues of the CaGIS journal (which, by the way, recently underwent an overhaul in the cover design) and the AutoCarto proceedings from past conferences online; offering AutoCarto



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once again in 2008 and then every two years after that, and working to further improve our already successful map competition. In addition, we strive to support the U.S. National Committee to the International Cartographic Association (USNC-ICA) in the best ways we can, this year supporting almost 30 U.S. scholars who are attending the ICA conference in Moscow.

In terms of recruitment of new members, the goal is not to just be bigger but to infuse the society with new ideas and new energy. To do that, we need to bring new people to the table and offer them the opportunity to promote new ideas. More than that, we need pathways to turn their ideas into actions and offer them rewards for their involvement.

CaGIS to me is uniquely positioned at the interface of cartography and GIS, which in themselves are

fusing so as to become less distinct. CaGIS spends much of its effort to support academic endeavors at this interface—for example, sponsoring the USNC-ICA, providing a premier peer-reviewed academic publishing outlet for scholars and practitioners in both cartography and GIS, offering a conference that is dedicated to issues at the interface of cartography and GIS, and sponsoring scholarships, mapping awards and distinguished career awards.

We have an incredibly hard-working board; the time and effort they volunteer is remarkable and tremendously appreciated. I have never seen anything like it on any of the other organizations I have served so far. The ACSM staff, and our journal editor Liz Nelson, also contribute tremendously to the success of the organization. But the goals and objectives of CaGIS require even more involvement.

ACSM BULLETIN: What message would you like to send to members and others?

BUCKLEY: We would like you to become involved, send us your comments and suggestions. Send us your new ideas and your criticisms. Send us a note of thanks or an offer to help. Let us hear from you about your thoughts on the organization— it is here to serve you.

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Michael Goodchild receives GITA's Lifetime Achievement Award

Michael F. Goodchild of Santa Barbara, Calif., has been given GITA's 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award at the

Geospatial Information & Technology Association's Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, this March. The award recognizes an individual's outstanding contributions and long-standing commitment to the geospatial industry.

Goodchild is professor of geography at the University of California, Santa Barbara; chair of the Executive Committee, National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA); associate director of the Alexandria Digital Library Project; and director of NCGIA's Center for Spatially Integrated Social Science.

Goodchild first encountered geographic information systems and computer mapping in the late 1960s, when it was a struggling high-end computing application, and said he's particularly gratified by the response the technology has received in universities.

Goodchild said he's happy that the general public has reached the point where virtually anyone with a Web browser can make use of geospatial tools; but, at the same time he said that geospatial professionals have only begun to recognize how far they still have to go in giving everyone access to the basic spatial literacy that's needed to use the tools effectively.

"I'm immensely honored by this award, especially as it comes from an organization that emphasizes the importance of education in the broad and expanding geospatial community. This is a very exciting time to be working in this area, particularly for the younger generation," Goodchild said.