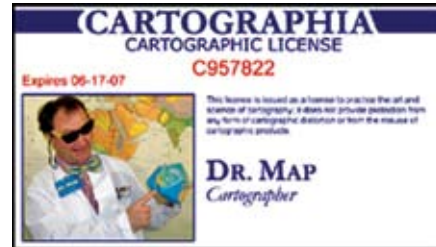


Ask Dr. Map!

curious curiosities



Q: At the end of the Ask Dr. Map! column it is stated that Dr. Map has a cartographic licence. I have never heard of a "licence" but am familiar with the word "license" as it is used here in America. Is this some new-fangled GIS speak? What gives?

A: Dr. Map has consulted the *Hutchinson Encyclopaedia* (sic). It states that "licence is the noun and license is the verb. In American English, however, the noun is spelled license. To remember the spellings, think of advice (noun) and advise (verb)." The source of information here is obviously British. In the U.S. and A. (to quote Borat), we normally use the word license for both the noun and the verb meanings. I can suggest three possible explanations: (1) There is no such thing as a cartographic license or licence, so the spelling is irrelevant; (2) There is a conspiracy afoot, with a European-trained *Bulletin* Editor, and just perhaps a European or Australian based Dr. Map, attempting to cajole the citizens of America into distinguishing between nouns and verbs!; (3) This is a subtle attempt to deduce information about the secret anonymous identity of Dr. Map. Your choice. I'll leave the wording as is for now, although you should note that the U.S. usage is followed on the Dr. Map website.

Q: The region surrounding the Gulf of Carpentaria is on which continent?

A: There is a simple and a hard answer to this question. The easy answer is Australia. But is Australia a continent?



Gulf of Carpentaria [<http://veimages.gsfc.nasa.gov>]

According to Wikipedia, "some geographers take Australia and all the islands of Oceania (or sometimes Australasia) to be equivalent to a continent, allowing the entire land surface of the Earth to be divided into continents or quasi-continents." The cited source of information is: Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen (1997) *The Myth of Continents: a Critique of Metageography*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Even then, the term Oceania is termed a quasi-continent. Apparently there is even disagreement on how many continents there are, with versions from five to seven. Answers.com defines a continent as: "one of the principal land masses of the Earth, usually regarded as including Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America," so defining their way out of the debate. Some research shows that popular use in Australia is to use "Australia" for the country, and to refer to the islands of the Pacific as either Oceania or Australasia or sometimes both, using a hyphen. Once again, Dr. Map will answer a question with more questions. Is Iceland part of Europe? Are the South Georgia islands part of Antarctica? Is there a line on the ground where Asia starts and Europe ends? Is Mexico in North America? [... and so on]

Q: Where is Google Maps centered? What about Google Earth?

A: According to Wired (see: www.wired.com/news/technology/internet/0-70227-0.html?tw=wn_technology_1), if you go to Google Maps, take the default view, and just keep zooming in, you arrive at 37.0625 N 95.677068 W, in a muddy brown pixel on Kristine Crispel's 53-acre Shamrock "K" horse farm outside Coffeyville, Kansas. Coffeyville considers itself very central to the USA. "We get e-mails from all over the world," said City Clerk Cindy Price in the Wired article. Apparently there is no explanation as to why this location was chosen. Coffeyville is a city of 11,000 on the Oklahoma border whose principal claim to fame otherwise is the elimination of the Dalton Gang in 1892. Google Earth, another cartographic service offered by the company, has a default zooming center in Lawrence, Kansas, company boss Brian McClendon's former hometown and *alma mater*, at the University of Kansas. In fact, the spot



Dr. Map, p. 44, 2nd col.

New maps of Great Salt Lake

- by Rob Baskin, USGS Utah Water Science Center

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has recently released the second of two maps defining the bottom surface of Great Salt Lake, Utah. These mapping efforts were the first detailed, systematic surveys of the lake.

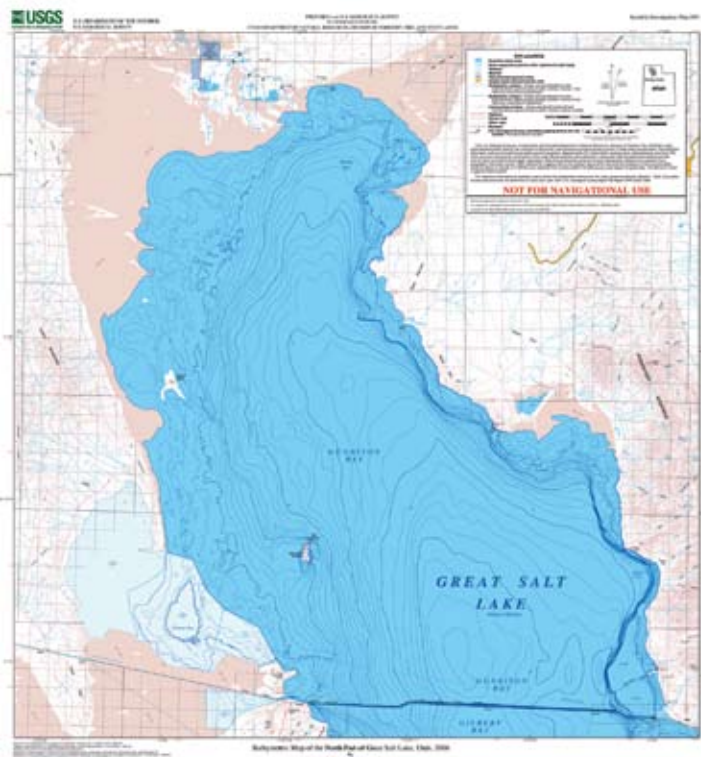
Great Salt Lake is actually two basins separated by a low-lying fault-controlled ridge extending from Promontory Point southwest to Hat Island. During recent history, the ridge has been submerged and consequently has not been shown in detail on any previous maps. Both basins trend primarily north-south and are bounded on the east edge by fault-related scarps. The deepest natural part of the lake is in the north basin at an altitude of about 4,167 feet or about 30 feet below the current lake surface. The Union Pacific Railroad causeway cuts through the north basin and through the deepest part of the lake, segmenting the north basin into two separate parts.

The new maps provide information about the physical shape of the lake and affect our understanding of the transport of salt and contaminants in the lake, the chemistry of the lake, the geologic history of the lake, and ecological implications of water depth and volume.

High tech mapping technology was used to create the new maps, including a high-definition fathometer, real-time differential global positioning system, and depth-discrete sound-velocity corrections. About 12.8 million depth measurements were collected along more than 1,695 miles (2,728 kilometers) of survey transects and were used in defining the bathymetry of the lake. This work was done during 2002-2006 in cooperation with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands.

Efforts are already underway to use these new data for lake circulation modeling, chemical transport, and in helping to better define the relation between the bathymetry of the lake and its biological and ecological components.

Digital copies of the bathymetric maps and accompanying informational sheets for both the north and south parts of Great Salt Lake (in PDF format) can be found on the Internet (<http://pubs.usgs.gov/sim/2006/2954/>; <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2006/1359/>; <http://pubs.usgs.gov/sim/2005/2894/>; and <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2005/1327/>.)



Dr. Map, from p. 43

is in a parking lot off Regency Place, Lawrence, Kansas—significance unknown.



Satnav [<http://www.watcher magazine.com>]

Q: What is the most ridiculous instance of Satnav-following?

A: Satnav, or satellite navigation, is now commonplace in cars around the world. Using the Global Positioning System and digitally stored maps, the systems provide either map displays or audio guidance. Devotees and spatial illiterates often slavishly follow their Satnav systems' instructions, well beyond where common sense should have taken over. According to the Press Association, reported on April 5, 2006 (uk.news.yahoo.com/05042006/344/sat-nav-drivers-close-edge.html#top_print), one particularly ridiculous occurrence is at a village called Crackpot in England (no, I'm not making this up!) There satnav systems are directing cars to the top of a 100-ft cliff, along an unclassified track that appears to be a road. Apparently cars, minibuses, and even large trucks have taken the steep and twisty road between Swaledale and Wensleydale in North Yorkshire, even though it is barely passable with a tracked vehicle. A farmer near the spot stated: "They get so far up and then there's a bad S-bend and they try to come back down. Some of them end up on three wheels because there's no barrier, just some big stones." There was also a case in Germany where a driver drove a BMW off a dock, thinking the dotted line of a ferry was a bridge, although a quick search showed no details of that one. Maybe the driver is embarrassed, and has covered their tracks!

Dr. Map has a Ph.D. and a cartographic licence. Send questions to Dr. Map at askdrmap@cox.net, or visit him on the web at <http://www.drmap.info>.

