

CaGIS slate of editors changes at the top

—by Ilse Genovese

The Cartography and Geographic Information Society (CaGIS) announced late August the appointment of Dr. Michael Leitner of Louisiana State University to serve as the Editor of Cartography and Geographic Information Science (CaGIS). He is taking over from Dr. Elisabeth S. Nelson as of January 2009. Dr. Jeong Chang "JC" Seong of University of West Georgia was offered the position of Associate Editor, previously held by Prof. Robert McMaster. Drs Leitner and Seong will team up with the journal's other Associate Editor, Dr. David A. Bennett, University of Iowa, to lead a strong journal which continues to grow in stature in the academic community.

The selection of Leitner and Seong doesn't come as a surprise; their research interests in cartography and GIScience mesh with the journal's primary focus. Beyond a propitious confluence of science there is also the human factor; both Leitner and Seong recognize the role CaGIS has played in helping to advance their academic careers. "It's about time for me to contribute some of my talent and resources to the society and people who have helped me to develop my career in GIScience," said Seong.

Leitner feels much the same. He published his first ever peer reviewed paper in CaGIS. This was thirteen years ago. Since then, the lead author of "Acquisition of Procedural Cartographic Knowl-

edge by Reverse Engineering" has contributed a number of top-notch papers to CaGIS, served on the journal's editorial board [since 2004], and co-edited, with André Skupin, the 2007 U.S. National Report to the International Cartographic Association [CaGIS vol. 34, no. 2].

Seong first came into contact with CaGIS in 2001, as a co-author of a paper entitled, "Fuzzy Image Classification for Continental-scale Multi-temporal NDVI Series Using Invariant Pixels and Image Stratification Method." The CaGIS Editor then was E. Lynn Usery, and GIScience was rising in prominence in the journal. Seong was back in 2005, with a paper on "Assessing Resampling Accuracy of Categorical Data Using Random Points." The paper was part of the 2005 AutoCarto proceedings published in CaGIS, Seong has kept his eyes on the journal since then.

As the Managing Editor of CaGIS since 1998, I have had the pleasure to edit Leitner's and Seong's papers and admire the science in them. So, when I heard of the appointments, I naturally wanted to find out who Leitner and Seong are in person and in what direction they might take the journal. Wearing my other hat, that of the Editor of ACSM Bulletin, I interviewed Leitner and Seong over the phone; parts of the discussions are reproduced on the following pages to enable current and prospective CaGIS authors make their own opinions about the new editors of CaGIS.



Prof. Michael Leitner, 43, witnessed the shift from manual (in the mid-1980s) to automated cartography (at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s),

and then the rise of geographic information systems and GIScience, first as a student of geography and cartography in Vienna, Austria, and later in the U.S. at SUNY Buffalo, as a postgraduate student and PhD candidate in Cartography and GIScience. Leitner is now tenured at Louisiana State University where he conducts research and teaches in different aspects of cartography and GIScience. Below is a glimpse into the new *CaGIS* editor's views about, and plans for, the journal.

ACSM BULLETIN: *In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the journal?*

LEITNER: *CaGIS* is the only national and international journal combining Cartography and GIScience. The journal has an extremely high reputation (nationally and internationally) among scientists working in both areas. Almost every important Cartographer or GIScientist has already published in this journal. Don't forget, *CaGIS* is one of the three official journals of ICA. This fact plus the fact that it publishes the AutoCarto proceedings have worked for the journal extremely well in the international arena. Then also, *CaGIS* publishes highly interdisciplinary research. It's almost a non-sequitur—Cartography and GIScience are themselves highly interdisciplinary, but this strength of the journal should not be down-played. Consider that barely two weeks after I was named the *CaGIS* editor, to take full control in 2009, I received my first manuscript from Canada, whose authors work in the field of Geography and different health disciplines. Another considerable strength of the journal is that it is "embedded" in an organization—the Cartography and Geographic Information Society. *CaGIS* the society considers *CaGIS* the journal one of its greatest accomplishments. The journal's contributors and members of its Editorial Board are some of the most prominent Cartographers and GIScientists currently conducting research in the U.S., and many of them have, invariably, served on the *CaGIS* Board or supported the organization as members. With regard to weakness, I see only one. *CaGIS* does not appear in the Social Science Citation Index; my primary goal is to have it listed under this Index during my term as editor.

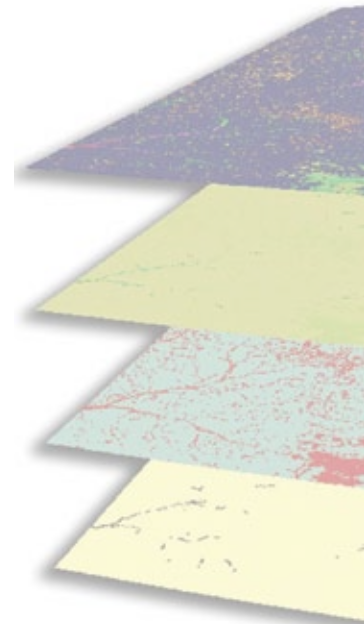
ACSM BULLETIN: *In which direction do you see the journal going in the next few years, under your stewardship?*

LEITNER: I want to be as open as possible. I believe that the type of research that's submitted is less important than

the quality of the research that's published. I would like to attract high-quality, cutting edge research contributions. It is the tradition of *CaGIS* to be inclusive rather than exclusive, and I would like to continue this tradition. Quantitative and qualitative, basic and applied, empirical and theoretical, national and international—I want to have a healthy mix of papers with these attributes. I want to attract as many contributions as possible so that I can select those that are the best.

ACSM BULLETIN: *Which strategies are you likely to employ to keep submission rates high?*

LEITNER: The submission rate is already high; Elizabeth Nelson saw a stream of 30 contributions a year. But the rejection rate has been high too—almost 50 percent. That type of statistic is indicative of the high standard my predecessors have set for the journal. Naturally, it's my intent to keep the standard high. The higher the number of manuscripts received, the higher the proportion of quality papers received—if one were to adopt the numbers theory. I would like to think that higher quality can, and should, be guaranteed by the editor and reviewers. The quantity and quality aspects of a journal's submissions tend to work together. In the case of *CaGIS*, high-quality content will help get the journal listed in the Social Science Citation Index; the listing, in turn, would encourage more submissions. Another strategy for maintaining a healthy flow of quality papers is to get the turn-around time from submission to production down to about 4-6 weeks. Authors want to have their papers published quickly. The last, but not the least, strategy is to promote *CaGIS* in as wide audiences as possible. AAG, AutoCarto, and GIScience conferences are venues where we are likely to find new contributors to *CaGIS*. As might be expected, within *CaGIS*, the task of promoting the



Images: This page, top: Courtesy of Yao and Zou, *CaGIS* 35(4), Figure 5.



journal is not the editor's prerogative; the two Associate Editors—Drs Bennett and Seong—and the members of the Editorial Advisory Board will continue to play a major role in this strategy.

REMARKS: I would like to thank the CaGIS Board (especially the president, Aileen Buckley, and vice president, Scott Freundsuh), the previous editor, Elizabeth Nelson, and you, the managing editor, for the support and help provided to me during the transition period. I am looking forward to a productive and successful working relationship with the CaGIS Editorial Board, reviewers, and, most importantly, authors.



Prof. Jeong Chang "JC"

Seong, 41, has, in his own words, "had unflagging enthusiasm for the geospatial sciences" ever since he was introduced to them in the mid-1980s in Seoul, South Korea.

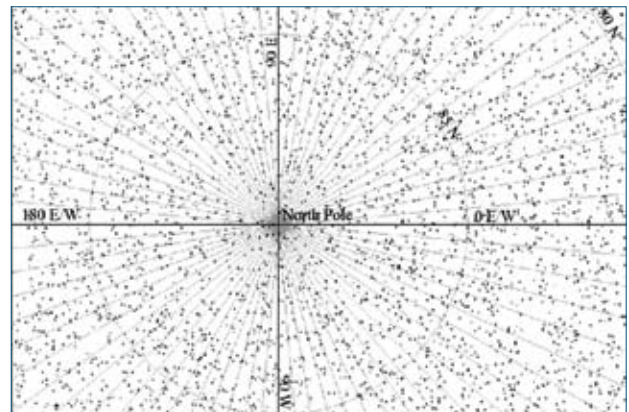
Seong's research experience has been enriched by involvement with GIS, cartography, remote sensing, surveying, and the computer sciences. Recent research projects are a good example of how these encounters with different segments of the geospatial world have helped shape his focus as a researcher and educator. Among them, his work on incorporating surveying methodologies in GIS, rediscovering map projections in a digital environment, and developing online geospatial teaching materials are telling. It's as if the twice tenured professor [in 2005 at Northern Michigan University and in 2008 at University of West Georgia] is re-examining cartographic theory against the practical world of the one-time ERDAS software engineer.

As an author of 16 papers published in various journals in the last decade, Seong is thrilled by the opportunity to be involved as Associate Editor in a journal that embraces GIScience. Like Leitner, the lead Editor, he sees the inclusion of *CaGIS* in the Science Citation Index as a number one priority. Seong likes that the journal is "math oriented"—anybody who has seen his complex

algorithms will understand why—, but there is a surprising twist to this preference. He is convinced that GIScientists need to rediscover the art in their cartography.

"It's pretty much about creativity," he said during the interview. "Cartography has been and should remain part science and part art. Thanks to cartography, we can access listings of restaurants, parks, businesses, etc. on our iPods, blackberries, and even the basic wireless phone. I like that, but GIS cartographers may also want to think about how maps work in these diverse areas of our lives."

I interpreted the statement as acknowledging a focus on data representation in both instruction [and by inference, research], but wishing for greater emphasis on appropriate design, e.g., choosing the right type of colors, fonts, and other visual aspects of map designing that enhance the readability of GIS maps.



Seong's interest in the "human side of business-oriented GIS maps" does not however mean that "we should dump GIS." He is convinced "GIS is important in representing the real world," and that this function of GIS would be enhanced "by re-defining cartography in the world of technology." He saw some papers on cartographic design published in the journal; he hopes there will be more of them in the coming years. *CaGIS* is the only academic publication in the U.S. with a strong focus on cartography; this focus is part of its uniqueness. Seong also sees a positive strength in the journal's tradition of attracting submissions from overseas. He agrees that conferences are the place to be when looking for new authors; other creative ways for boosting submission of invited papers may be needed. He is excited to be part of a new stage in *CaGIS* evolution and looks forward to helping the Editor in shaping that new stage.

This page, top and middle: Images courtesy of JC Seong.