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Who Me, a Journal Editor? A Ten Year Journey

My work on the *Journal of Map & Geography Libraries* began around 2008, when, in discussion with Paige Andrew and Mary Larsgaard, I volunteered to review for the journal. They said yes, enthusiastically, and I joined the Editorial Board. Within a year, Mary was in the process of retirement, which included her plans to step down as Co-editor. In March 2009, Paige sent a letter (an actual print document) to each Editorial Board member sharing Mary's upcoming retirement plans, and explaining their desire for a member of the Editorial Board to join Paige as the new Co-Editor. They planned a one-year transition to include a one-year role as Associate Editor, then evolving into the Co-editor role with Paige. I had long admired the work of Mary and Paige, and had worked with them both previously (publishing an article in their special, double issue of *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* (volume 27, 1999) on Map Cataloging). I was between projects; the timing was good for me to take on a new responsibility. In addition, this was a particularly good fit for my professional interests. It harkened back to the time during my graduate program when I served as editorial assistant for the journal *Public Libraries*. Further, it provided a venue for me to dig more deeply into the realm of scholarly communication and scholarly publishing, and, within that, in the topic of my area of specialization, the world of map and geographic information. I replied. The three of us had a conference call. After giving it some thought and conferring with a number of trusted colleagues, within weeks, I was the new Associate Editor. Throughout the remainder of the year, I made the most of the mentoring from Mary, as well as Paige, and in 2010 became co-editor. This editorial transition year came at the same time as the journal shifted from Hayworth Information Press to Routledge/Taylor & Francis, which necessitated the implementation of numerous new procedures and details relating to Taylor & Francis' online journal management system, ScholarOne, as well as the re-design of the cover art.

Once engaged as a full-fledged co-editor, I posed a number of strategic, policy and procedure questions to Paige, then worked toward expanding the reach and impact of the journal. Among the first decisions that we tackled was to build what Paige and Mary had as informal agreements into more formal written guidelines, such as one for the guest editor roles and responsibilities and the procedures for the Best Paper Award Committee. We also felt that as the journal had evolved over time, partly due to changes in the profession, the scope statement was due for updating, and we did that as well. As part of this desire to strengthen the infrastructure, we also expanded the Editorial Board to include a number of wonderful individuals we are happy to call colleagues and contributors; many are among the international community. Along the way, we facilitated the production of a number of special, themed issues, many on topics that were my suggestion. Those also required finding or matching these topics with experts in the field that could serve as guest editors. The special themed issues that I participated on were: Preservation of Digital Geospatial Materials, 6(1), guest edited by Julie Sweetkind-Singer; Geographic

Opportunities in Medicine, 7(1), guest edited by Amy J. Blatt; Crisis Mapping, 8(2), guest edited by Patrick Florence; Working Digitally with Historic Maps, 9(1-2), guest edited by Humphrey Southall; the journal's 10 Year Anniversary, 10(1); International Perspectives: A View of Map & Geography Libraries, Their Collections and Services Worldwide, 10(3); Geospatial Data Management, Curation and Preservation, 11(2 & 3) and 12(1), guest edited by Robert (Bob) Downs; Education for Geographic Information, 12(3), guest edited by Bradley Wade Bishop; and Semantic Historic Gazetteers, 13(1), guest edited by Carmen Brando and Francesca Frontini.

I have learned a lot about myself in these years as co-editors. First, I feel that I am a much better editor than an author. Writing has always felt like a chore to me; however, once I got the hang of editing, I found that I quite enjoy it. Further, I understand at a much deeper level the importance of the editorial role in the larger flow of scholarly communication. That is, shaping the journal at the macro level, such as updating the journal scope statement, scanning the community for informed and engaged professionals to serve as Editorial Board members, and turning ideas of hot topics-of-the-day into themed issues, publicizing and celebrating the journal. I learned that I as an editor, I had to become much more aware and conversant of the ethical situations that editors might encounter, such as with situations that our peer reviewers or authors may generate. With this, I was greatly informed by the work of COPE: Committee on Publishing Ethics, and highly recommend that authors, editors and peer reviewers examine the COPE case studies and other resources. The influence, or shaping of the scholarly conversation, is true at the micro level as well, such as, on occasion, helping shape an author's idea into a publishable manuscript, and at other times, helping shape a well-intentioned but less-structured manuscript into a more coherent message. I find a great deal of satisfaction in these mentoring exchanges, particularly with novice researchers who may not have had someone in their host institution to support their research and writing.

Early in my tenure, Paige and I had the opportunity to contribute to the larger discussions around scholarly communication and scholarly publishing. We, and many journal editors, found ourselves in discussions with the Taylor & Francis editorial and management staff in 2010, leading to their creation of the Routledge/Taylor & Francis' two-year 'Green OA' Author-Rights policy in 2011. That policy allows authors to sign a License to Publish (rather than assign copyright) and to post their article to a repository without an embargo period. We described the policy in some detail in our editorial in volume 9, number 3. Routledge/Taylor & Francis later expanded the policy from the initial two-year pilot to a long-standing policy, for which we, and the larger scholarly community find quite gratifying.

Lastly, as with everything in life, the people are often what make the work fulfilling and meaningful. It has been a pleasure to work with Paige G. Andrew as a co-editor for these almost ten years. We have learned how best (and when and how) to pass the ball to each other regarding journal business as needed, and have managed to meet most deadlines without causing too much burden or angst for the other. What is more, he has been cooperative, supportive and appreciative of my ideas and approaches for new or different strategies for the journal. These qualities are not something that I take for granted in professional collaborations and is much appreciated. Likewise, it has been a pleasure to work with the Taylor & Francis editorial office staff, our numerous JMGL editorial board members, and the variety of authors encountered along the way. I hope and believe that they are all pleased with the exposure

that their research and writing have received through publishing in JMGL, as well as the long-term impact of their works to the scholarly community and their careers. I look forward to seeing the journal; its articles, themes and influence evolve in the coming years as the new co-editors, Marcy Bidney and Nathan Piekielek take up their new roles. I hope that this recap of my experience has provided a glimpse behind the scenes of the workings of *JMGL*, the roles and influences that are possible for someone in an editorial role, as well as inspire one or more of you to consider this work at some point in your future.

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *the Journal of Map & Geography Libraries*, January 22, 2018 DOI: 10.1080/15420353.2017.1416852