

# *AAPT*

# *NEWSLETTER*



*Atlantic Association of Planning Technicians*

*Spring 2000*

## *Workshop 2000*

### **Making it Fit: GIS Data, Datum and Projection Problems**

**This informative and thought provoking workshop is in the works for June 7, 8, and 9th . Once again we will be at the Centre of Geographic Sciences in Lawrencetown and are privileged to have access to their facilities.**

**The sessions planned include some history and review of the problems faced with projections and datum issues as well as a look at what's in store for the future. Hands on sessions in the lab will explore some options for solving these complicated problems and a surprise "off the subject" session on Friday with returning presenter Jim Todd. Those of you who remember his session on fitting air photos to the map by using Corel Draw! will want to attend this to see what neat stuff he's up to now!**

**So fill out your Registration Form enclosed with this newsletter and send it in. Deadline is May 24th. Remember that your up to date membership qualifies you for a discount on the registration fee, so while you're at it renew that membership now!**

## *News From the Schools*

### **Planning and Land Information Technology, Nova Scotia Community College, Lawrencetown**

It's exam week as I write this. The gym is full of surveyors, the labs are either full of students trying to get their final plots off, or closed while instructors try to make sure that the exam they want to run that afternoon will actually work on all the computers. In other words, a normal exam week.

Planning has been busy this year. Mike D. has settled into the teaching life again and is once more sending e-mails to students at 4 AM. Phil isn't. This too I guess is 'back to normal'

The graduating class is either looking for work or trying to get their research projects done. A few already have jobs which is the normal employment rate for us at this time of year, so that we are hoping our regular 100% employment within 6 months of graduation will be achieved again (of those who have work, GIS is the primary aspect of the job). One has been accepted with advanced standing into the NSCAD planning program and will be pursuing the professional planning career. (others who have previously graduated are also looking to go back to school: Tara Holmes and Janet Porter are investigating grad schools in planning).

Summer employment for first year is unknown right now. There are

some who have been interviewed for co-op positions, but whether or not other jobs appear is too early to tell (I know that some places are still dealing with budgets). The main problem with the co-op positions is making sure that there are students willing to take them if they are in communities which do not have a student from there

As you remember, its a tough choice between making money and making experience.

I cant't remember if I gave the research topics in the last newsletter, but assuming that I didn't they are:

-Suzanne Julien has prepared a number of GIS lesson plans for NS teacher using NS Geomatics Centre Data.

- Jen Boutlier has developed a GIS model for Truro to match parking area needs to the appropriate businesses.

- Chad Boutlier and Carla Slauenwhite have each worked with Keji on data needs for visitor surveys and trail designs

- Melissa Bonin has worked with Kings County on streetscapes, focusing on New Minas.

- Michel Melanson has provided a great deal of information and suggestions to a citizens group on the Metegan River.

- Melissa MacKay has been attempting to resolve issues the NS DNR has with a deer habitat GIS model.

- Shirley Inglis looked at the water data gathered by the clean Annapolis River Project , comparing it to other citizen groups and evaluating it for its effectiveness

-Sally Hilton has prepared a set of maps for the Ecology Action Centres proposed water trail along

the south shore

- David O'Grady has continued his previous sumers work on the Trans-Canada Trail

- TJ Maguire is developing a means by which the local district planning commission can transmit data and files among the member towns by the web.

David Kern of Delta Four consultants and Roger Sturtevant of the Annapolis DPC have once again participated as advisors on a number of the projects.

The second year class attended the API meeting last fall on the proposed legislation for planners, and the faculty have formally taken the position that the legislation should go forward as long as other "related" groups such as planning technicians and development officers are also included

Mike tells me that he has introduced object oriented programming into his courses and will be expanding this next year. I guess the equivalent for me would be an increasing focus on the quality of the data that gets used and trying to make students aware that just because data is digital doesn't make it high quality ( an apparent common assumption with incoming students)

So that's it from here , hope you all have a good summer (it snowed on me this morning).

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**Urban & Rural Planning  
Technology, Holland College,**

## **Summerside , P.E.I.**

It is with mixed emotions that I begin this news update from the URPT program at Holland College. I'm pleased to see the completion of another successful year, but saddened to report it is to be the programs last. College administration has decided our program and three others will not be offered in the coming year.

### **A Look Back**

On September 2, 1969, Holland College officially opened its doors, offering four programs: secretarial, electronics, commercial design and resources planning (our programs' original name). The program was created to meet the technical staffing demands of newly created municipal and provincial planning departments throughout Atlantic Canada.

In addition to the core planning curriculum, students in the early years of the program were exposed to a wide range of studies in environmental and resource based applications. Interest in these areas led to URPT spawning two other full time programs; Environmental Technology in 1978 and Renewable Resource Management Technology in the early 1980's.

Pierre Claude was the program's original instructor. Others to follow him included Ken Sharples, Dave Morgan, Percy Simmonds, Steve Smith, myself, Brian Gallant and Terry Scott. Percy was the longest serving member of the group (20 years), and was instrumental in making the program a trail blazer at Holland College. Under Percy's guidance, URPT was the first Holland College program to offer distance education opportunities for students and was also the first program to establish articulation agreements with outside institutions. Agreements with the planning programs at the Nova

Scotia College of Art and Design and the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute have allowed a large number of graduates the opportunity for further study.

Over the last 30 years the program has produced close to 300 graduates. A good number of these people hold senior positions in municipal and provincial planning departments, economic development organizations and private sector planning and geomatics firms.

### **The Present**

The current class at URPT has produced an impressive body of work this year, including the following:

- A number of projects at Slemmon Park; the former CFB Summerside, including a land use survey and background studies for the production of a planning strategy; a study and recommendations for Park signage, and the design for a seniors housing subdivision
- Production of a report examining safety concerns in the City of Summerside, with recommendations and designs for improvement utilizing the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
- Site analysis and design for a proposed condominium development in Egmont Bay, PEI
- Production of community profiles for Sherbrooke, Linkletter, Morrell and Miltonvale Park, P.E.I.
- Work with an Island planning consultant on the Official Plans for the Towns of Souris, Alberton and Montague. Duties include a land use survey, background research, preparation of public notices and meeting facilitation. One student had

the opportunity to draft a section of the Souris O.P.

- One student was hired by an Island firm to produce a site plan for a service station/convenience store development

Students and staff of the program were represented at the AAPT workshop and meeting this past summer in Charlottetown and at the recent Nova Scotia Development Officers workshop and meeting in Wolfville, N.S.

Two of this years graduates have already obtained employment. Elaine Doucette is now a GIS Technician at Universal Systems Inc. in Fredericton, N.B. and Marc Robichaud has been hired as a Mapping Technician by Geonet Technologies of Bedeque, P.E.I.

### **Farewell**

It seems somehow fitting that both URPT(30 years) and AAPT (25 years) should be celebrating anniversaries in 2000. The AAPT was instrumental in having "Planning Technician" recognized as a civil service designation throughout the Atlantic region, opening the door for employment for our program graduates.

I'd like to say thank you to all the URPT graduates and AAPT members who have made my job so enjoyable and rewarding over the last number of years. Although the program is gone, it's legacy lives on in the knowledgeable and generous people who have made their way through our doors. I know URPT will be well represented by their participation in the field of planning technology for years to come.

Glenn, Instructor, URPT

# A Tale of One City (oops!, I mean one Regional Municipality) OR :HRM Submits boundary proposal to URB

submitted by: Hilary Campbell, Planning Technician, HRM Planning Services

Planning technicians get involved in some pretty interesting and sometimes controversial projects. Such was the case when I was asked to provide technical support to the District Boundary Advisory Committee (Committee). Its mandate was to submit one or more proposals to Regional Council for new polling (electoral) districts, which in turn would be submitted to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (URB). By law, the population of each district must not vary more than 25% from the average. Prior to this review, two districts were over the 25% variance limit. A review also was mandated for this time by the Municipal Government Act. The municipality had 23 districts before the review began.

The committee was struck in April 1999, but the process was delayed. Work resumed in September under a great deal of pressure to come up with several scenarios for new district boundaries within a very short time frame. The entire process was completed in about 3½ months, compared with the two-year period that Cape Breton Regional Municipality had to review their boundaries.

The first step for staff was to recommend a population data source. It was first thought that we could use the enumeration data captured for the 1998 provincial election to come up with voting population totals but difficulties in translating the data made it unreliable. To have a consistent data source across HRM on which to base our analysis, it was decided that the 1996 Census of Canada enumeration areas would be the best source.

Once the 2000 voting-age population was derived by calculating those ages 15 and over in 1996, we compared the results to those produced by a formal population projection method. The differences were minimal, so the Committee decided that this very basic method would suffice.

We did not try to incorporate figures for any new development since 1996. As you may know, certain areas of HRM have grown exponentially in the last 3-4 years. However, trying to correlate building and

occupancy permits with subdivision applications to derive with an estimated population would have been time-consuming, and the results would be too subjective. In other words, we knew the 1996 figures were wrong, but at least they were consistently wrong! Room was left to accommodate for growth in those districts where they knew the population figures were incorrect.

The Committee then directed staff to come up with a "minimal change" scenario, accommodating growth and high density areas in HRM. This effort resulted in a 22-seat scenario. While the 22-seat proposal was being reviewed, staff also created a 16-seat scenario. The committee decided that this would be too great a change without the proper research to support it, and there was no time to conduct that research. One other possibility was to follow the provincial riding boundaries, but this would have resulted in 17 districts that would have exceeded the variance limit, especially in the area of North and East Preston, where a riding was created at the provincial level specifically for that small area.

Work continued on the 22-seat scenario, and after much debate and revision work the final proposal was 24 seats. This was considered the best compromise in a "minimal change" situation: one which would retain representation for specific communities of interest while allowing for tremendous growth in certain areas. The final report supported a 24-seat proposal, but also made other recommendations, including that the next review should begin much farther in advance of the deadline, and that a proposal for a reduced Council would be feasible with the proper effort and research.

The report was submitted to Regional Council by on 18 January 2000, and Council voted to submit the report as it stood, without comment, to the Utility and Review Board. Hearings were held throughout the week of 28 February. The first hearing was a day-long session at the URB offices during which the Municipal Solicitor presented the proposal on behalf of HRM, and staff were sworn in as

witnesses. My role at the hearings was to describe each of the proposed districts and to explain what data was used for analysis. Tony O'Carroll also attended the first day to explain the reasons behind the decision to use census data and to verify that it was the most accurate source available at that time. The remainder of the hearings were open to members of the public to ask questions or make comments on the proposal.

Generally, the proposal was not well received by the public. There were some who were happy with the changes, as it meant better representation on Council for them. However, there were far more negative comments than positive. Essentially it came down to the NIMBY syndrome: "sure, go ahead and make changes, but not here." Certain groups felt that changing the district line in their area would "splinter" their traditional communities, and some insisted that the URB return to pre-amalgamation boundaries. Some councillors came to the hearings and spoke in defence of their districts.

The Board handed down its decision on 5 April 2000: no changes are to be made before the October 2000 election. The lack of time given to the review and the lack of research into other options were cited as reasons. However, as part of that decision, the URB has decreed that another review must be completed before 30 June 2003, and that Council must be reduced in size with a maximum number of seats set at 16.

The next review should be interesting indeed!

## *One Final Word (or two!)*

Ruth Dugas, President

Well it is time once again to pick the brain for something interesting to say to you all.

With my upcoming retirement, I will also be withdrawing from the leadership of this organization and taking a back seat to much of the major decisions. I can honestly say that it has been fulfilling and I will miss it, although I am sure that I will not get away so easily.

During my ten years with the AAPT, I have seen a

transformation of sorts. The ups and downs have been there and we are now seeing a change in direction from when the whole thing started 25 years ago.

This being our anniversary year, we have tried to locate our founding fathers and recognize them for their efforts to promote our profession. A daunting task that has been and the jury is still out on who exactly made up that elite group. It seems that no one really wanted to take credit (or blame depending on how you may look at it). If any of you have more insight into this matter your opinion will be appreciated.

This past year we have been dealt a blow with the impending loss of the Urban and Rural Planning program at Holland College. The Board decided last year to not accept applications for a first year program which I fear sealed it's fate. Our Association wrote to the college Directors with a plea to re-evaluate this move, however it was a done deal as far as they were concerned, citing low enrollment over the last 5 years or so. Alton Glenn has been regrouping and we are hopeful that the phoenix may rise from the ashes yet. His plan is along the distance education path, using a system similar to the decum chart which Holland College has used for the program. So, there still may be a light at the end of the fixed link.

I have been very busy these last few months. We have recently completed a revised Plan and By-law for the Municipality of Argyle which received approval on Feb. 4th 2000. Possibly the first approved Plan of the Millenium!!! I started the maps before Jacob was born (and he's 4) so it was a monumental occasion for me. Right now there is a rush to finish up mapping for the Municipality of Yarmouth's revised documents before I leave.

I will miss the panic, I'm sure, but you know what they say, "a change is as good as a rest". And in my case it will likely be both!

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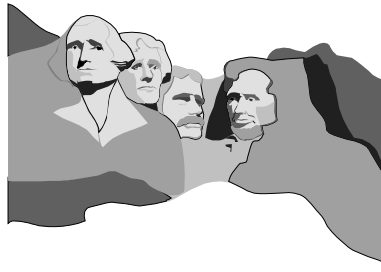
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**Q: what's the difference between  
a Planning Director and a  
terrorist?**

**A: you can negotiate with a  
terrorist!**

**PROVINCIAL REPS**



### **NEW BRUNSWICK**

Shawn Lamey  
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### **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

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### **NEWFOUNDLAND**

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FAX (709) 782 3601

### **NOVA SCOTIA**

Presently vacant

### **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION CONTACTS**

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#### **NS Community College - COGS**

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## Alumni

Percy Simmonds is working on a  
database of Holland College Planning  
Grads. Anyone who attended the  
College should contact him at:

**902 566 9605**

or [psimmonds@hollandc.pe.ca](mailto:psimmonds@hollandc.pe.ca)

## Membership

Membership renewal is due with this  
edition. Please make sure that you  
are up to date in order to receive a  
discount on the Workshop  
registration! Complete the renewal  
form accompanying this newsletter  
and return to Peter Corbett with your  
cheque.

## Brochure

Our AAPT Brochure is now available in  
English and French. Anyone wishing to  
order these can contact the President.  
Thanks goes to Francis LeBlanc in  
Shediac for the excellent translation job.

## Submissions

Articles or ideas for this newsletter may be  
forwarded to :

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FAX : 902 869 4230

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Visit the A.A.P.T. Website at our temporary home.

There is lots of great information on everything from sprucing up your resume to the latest GIS info.

Next time your online, take a peek...

<http://www.cogs.ns.ca/aapt>



## TIDBIT

All PEI statutes are now available on the Internet. Some of interest to Planning Technicians include the Planning Act, Municipalities Act, Road Act and Lands Protection Act. The Province is planning to soon add the regulations for these Acts to the website. The Statutes are available at: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/law/statutes/bydept.php3>