

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues:

The state of our Society is sound! It is my pleasure to report to you that 1997 was a very productive and successful year for ISPRS. As you will see in this 1997 Annual Report (covered in this and next quarters' issue of *Highlights*), our seven Commissions and 45 Working Groups have been quite active in addressing advancements and developments in their respective areas of responsibility in the photogrammetric, remote sensing and spatial information sciences. 1997 was a year for numerous Workshops and Seminars of the WG's as well as preparatory meetings for the 1998 series of Commission Symposia.

Your Council convened in April and September and I feel blessed to have such an outstanding team to work with in the management of the Society. As a result of our team efforts I had the pleasure, on 25 April 1997, to cosign with UN Deputy to the Director-General, N. Jasentuliyana a landmark Memorandum of Understanding between ISPRS and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs. In brief, the MOU calls for our organizations to collaborate and to jointly promote and conduct activities of mutual interest. Then in November, our team participated in the CEOS 11th Plenary Meeting in Toulouse. This resulted in an invitation for ISPRS to become a CEOS Affiliate. In yet another initiative, it is my pleasure to report that the ISPRS Educational Opportunities Program was approved in April and the pilot program started in October under the capable leadership of 2nd Vice President Marcio Barbosa. The pilot program covers the Latin American region and will be completed at the end of 1998. After evaluating the pilot program process and making appropriate refinements, we look forward to expanding the Educational Opportunities Program to other regions of the world

Other noteworthy 1997 efforts and events have been the: (a) successful renegotiation of our publication contracts with Elsevier and RICS which now provide ISPRS with more control and improved service; (b) very smooth transition of ISPRS Journal Editor-in-Chief from Prof. David Tait to Dr. Emmanuel Baltsavias. We thank David for his many years of devoted service to ISPRS; (c) preparation by Secretary General John Trinder of the new "Manual of Operation for ISPRS Technical Commissions and Working Groups" (Orange Book) which clearly outlines and clarifies responsibilities; (d) preparation of seven ISPRS project proposals for subvention support from UNESCO through UATI channels which is a new and hopeful endeavor by ISPRS; (e) preparation of three background papers by ISPRS in preparation for the 1999 UNISPACE III Conference; (f) outstanding effort by ISPRS WebMaster, Andre Streilein in his preparation, maintenance and enhancement of the ISPRS HomePage (www.geod.ethz.ch/ISPRS), and; (g) positive increase in ISPRS Membership of one Associate Member and five Sustaining Members.

This 6th issue of *ISPRS Highlights* demonstrates the commitment of our Society to provide timely information about Society activities on a quarterly basis. In this issue you will find the first half of our 1997 ISPRS Annual Report, the second half of which you will receive in our next issue. We encourage you to suggest to ISPRS Council any improvements in the content, delivery, or style of *Highlights* (and the ISPRS HomePage) so that we can strive to meet the

needs of our Members and to keep other relevant and interested organizations informed of our activities. As in all ISPRS activities, the content of *Highlights* is totally dependent on the efforts of volunteers. Council can use your help in finding volunteers to serve as Editors for the News, Reports, and Events Calendar Sections. This would certainly help to ease the workload, especially in support of the superb efforts of Secretary General Prof. John Trinder.

Now with regard to workloads, we of Council and others have long recognized the need for additional support to achieve Society objectives. In recent years, the growth and vitality of ISPRS activities has been very significant. As volunteers, Council members are becoming increasingly stretched in their ability to serve the Society. We have been most fortunate for a Society of our size to survive and flourish through purely volunteer service (for over 88 years)! In this regard our Society's good fortune has been due to the generous support provided by the employer's of Council members. This is not a new revelation but a redundant recognition of the need for constructive change. Parallel to the growth of our Society is the tremendous growth of the sciences, technologies and applications in which our Society is involved. Spatial information is essential to meet global, regional and local needs of the future. Socio-institutional changes are increasingly changing the roles of government and industry. Modern trends call for increased productivity which is exhibited, for example, by the role of PC's and networks in the workplace, and for out-sourcing of labor and materials, and for interoperable systems using commercial-off-the-shelf technologies, etc. Unfortunately, these changes have often led to a trend of less volunteerism.

In light of these conditions Council has decided to study options for enhancing the mission and objectives of the Society and to consider achievable modes for effective improvement of Society operations. In this integrated and challenging endeavor we are receptive to constructive suggestions and have already received many for consideration. To address this, Council is convening a Strategic Planning Meeting in early March with specific aim to evaluate the ISPRS mission, goals and capabilities. The desired outcome is an achievable implementation plan for ISPRS to operate as it enters the 21st Century. It will be distributed to our Officers and Member Organizations for refinement. The intent is to achieve early implementation after acceptance by our Members.

In summary, ISPRS continues to be very productive. Our international cooperation and communication outreach roles are expanding. Clearly ISPRS plays a very valuable role as an international non-governmental organization devoted to the development of international cooperation for the advancement of photogrammetry, remote sensing, spatial information systems and their applications. ISPRS will continue to adapt its mode of operation for efficiency and effectiveness to serve the needs of our Members and the global Society. I am very optimistic for the future of ISPRS.

Lawrence W. Fritz

ISPRS President