

## THE PORTOLAN AT 50

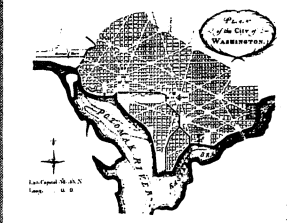
by The Portolan Editors

The Washington Map Society began in 1979 as a small group interested in map collecting, cartography, and cartographic history. On September 18, 1984, the membership approved a Board proposal that a journal named *The Portolan* be published. The Editors since the start of the journal are listed below:

Dr. Jonathan T. Lanman, Founding Editor (1984-1987)  
 Nancy Goddin Miller, Editor (1988)  
 Nancy Goddin Miller and Charles A. Burroughs, Co-Editors (1989)  
 Charles A. Burroughs, Editor (1989-1996)  
 Marianne McKee, Associate Editor (1990-19991)  
 Jeanne Young, Associate Editor (1992-1996)  
 Jeanne Young, Editor (1996-1997)  
 Thomas F. Sander, Editor (1997-present)

While it is certainly possible to summarize the work and thoughts of these people into a single, short article, perhaps it is better to let them, in their own words, tell you what they have thought of the experience.

To begin, Janet Lanman, wife of our late Founding Editor Jonathan T. Lanman:



**THE PORTOLAN**  
 WASHINGTON MAP SOCIETY

Volume 1 Number 1 October 10, 1984

MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIETY'S PRESIDENT

GREETINGS:

As the Washington Map Society enters its sixth season, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the membership for the support I have received since my election in May as your President for 1984-85. The Board members: Robert C. Hansen, Vice President; Jeanne Young, Secretary; James A. Flatness, Treasurer, have been extremely cooperative in setting plans and policies in motion.

A major new undertaking is the launching of a Society publication that will keep the membership informed on up-coming Society and other meetings, exhibitions, forums, seminars, listings of new books, periodicals, articles dealing with cartography, feature articles written by our members; reviews of our speakers lectures and other information of specific interest to our membership. You will note from this first issue's masthead the distinguished group who will join together to produce this new publication, working with our first Editor, former President of the Society, Dr. Jonathan T. Lanman. We begin publication on a modest scale, with plans to expand and enrich the contents as interest and funding allow. We must rely upon input of material for the publication not only from our volunteer editorial staff, but from the entire membership. We need YOUR help — we solicit your support and suggestions to assure success of this new "voice" in the cartographic field.

Dr. Robert A. Highbarger kindly accepted my request to serve as Chairman of the By-Laws Committee, assisted by Richard W. Stephenson, Walter R. Ristow, and Jeanne Young, to draft by-laws for the Society subject to membership approval, with a view toward applying for tax-free educational status for the Society.

The list of confirmed programs and meeting locations for the year is nearing completion, with flexibility to call special meetings when warranted.

Major General and Mrs. Richard S. Abbey have agreed to head the Hospitality Committee — our members have a bond of common interest, and the Abbey's will see that members become better acquainted by providing name tags, introductions, and on special occasions, refreshments prior to the meetings.

Hal Aber, a member of the National Geographic staff and a recent addition to our Society will serve as Membership Chairman, providing membership applications for those who wish to introduce new members into the Society. He may be reached at his home telephone number: (301) 279-2027. He will also work with Jeanne Young to keep the membership roster complete and up to date. It may become necessary in the future to

*Since being asked to reminisce about John's time as the first editor of The Portolan, I have enjoyed thinking about the great pleasure John derived from his close involvement with the Washington Map Society. He relished his association with friends with mutual enthusiasm for, and frequently superior knowledge of, the world of cartography. John always delighted in researching the unusual. He took pleasure in helping form the Washington Map Society and in serving as its second president. In 1984 when Janet Green was president, it was decided to venture into a serial publication and John enthusiastically became the first editor. The first volume consisted of four stapled together sheets, the subscribers numbered 71; the latest volume consists of 72 pages with over 250 subscribers.*

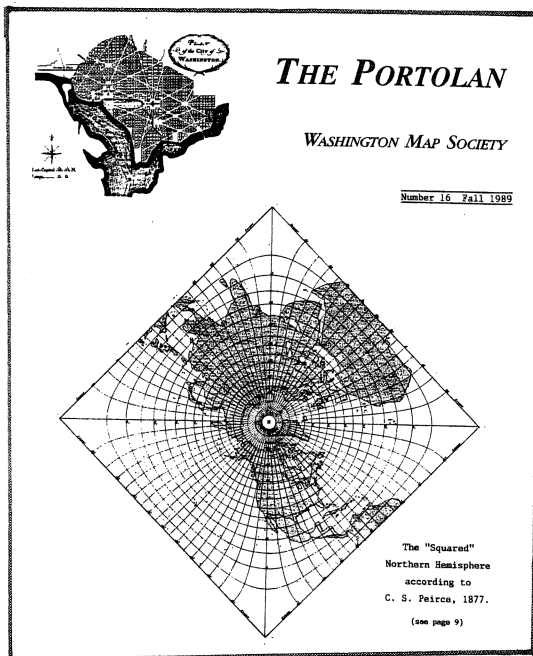
*At about this time John had acquired one portolan chart and then another. His curiosity was aroused and he launched into an in-depth study of the significance and history of these beautiful "haven finding" charts. They were on his curiosity front-burner and no doubt led to the suggestion for the name of the fledgling publication. (His research on portolan charts eventually*

led to the publication of his *Origin of Portolan Charts* by the Newberry Library in 1987) Ever since his early days at Yale John was intrigued by old maps and globes. During World War II he spent two years in the interior of China examining potential candidates for Chiang Kai-shek's officers training school! Traveling about in remote areas of China stimulated his interest in the history, geography and arts of the orient and the age of exploration. Over the years John and I were fortunate to travel to numerous corners of the globe, some intriguingly remote — Turkey, Portugal, Italy, Egypt, China, England, Japan etc. John was constantly on the lookout for old maps and frequently found treasures. It has given me pleasure to reread some of the old issues of *The Portolan* and also John's *Glimpses of History from Old Maps*, which is filled with fascinating bits of esoteric knowledge. I remember his concentrated attention and satisfaction as he unearthed each new fact.

—Janet Lanman

When John took ill, Nancy Goddin Miller stepped in and assisted in keeping *The Portolan* afloat as the transition was made to Charlie Burroughs. Comments on her service are included in Charlie's remarks below (he has been our longest serving editor to date, from 1989-1996):

### Recollections of an Editor



Any discourse reflecting upon my over seven years' involvement with editing *The Portolan* must first pay tribute to the founding editor, Jonathan T. Lanman. For it was he who set the high standards in the content and layout of the publication that have been maintained to this day. My first recollection of any direct association with the publication, apart from receiving the very first issue in 1984 as an early member of the Society, was when Jonathan requested that I consider writing an article about the founder of the U.S. Coast Survey, Ferdinand Rudolph Hassler (1770-1843). That was in the spring of 1987 when Jonathan had caught wind of the fact that I was spearheading a drive to raise funds through private contributions to restore a monument to Hassler at Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia. That article appeared in Issue No. 10 in the fall of that year. Of course, we had also had some minimal contact during my term as president of the Society (1985-86). It was during that period that he consulted me about "growing" the publication from 10 loose-leaf pages to 18. "Where would the

money come from to do such a thing?" he asked. It was then that I suggested we institute a "Portolan Enhancement Fund" and request contributions over and above the basic annual Society dues. "Great idea," he said. "Let's run it up the flagpole to the officers and see if it flies." The rest is history, and it's largely because of the great generosity of many of our members that even to this day, we can be so proud of the legacy of that decision. As an aside, I should also mention that idea was spawned in the "inner sanctum" of Jonathan's "Map Room," a specially constructed temperature and humidity controlled chamber within his Bethesda residence that housed his fine collection of rare books and maps. Most of that collection was bequeathed to Yale University, his alma mater, following his death in 1988.

The next date in this chronology of events that I can vividly remember occurred along about January 1988. The phone rang - - it was Janet Lanman. "Charles, you are going to have to take over *The Portolan*." I was dumbstruck. Although I was aware Jonathan was seriously ill, I had no idea his situation was so grave. Already knee-deep in a number of voluntary activities during this, my third year of re-

irement, my response was "Janet, I don't believe this is a decision you or I can make -- it must be made by the officers of the Society." As secretary, Nancy Goddin Miller already had been assisting and doing much of the work for the upcoming issue. Thus it was decided that she and I would serve as co-editors for a period of time. When Nancy moved up to president in 1989, I took over as editor. I am grateful for that transition as it gave me a good sense of just what the job entailed. Nancy and I inherited Jonathan's trusty typist, Josephine Fiala.

The largest Portolan during my tenure was No. 30 (summer 1994) with 36 pages. Along about the spring of 1991, I felt the need for some assistance and Marianne Withers (McKee) agreed to serve as Associate Editor for about a year after which Jeanne Young served in that same capacity. Jeanne continued in that role until the winter of 1996 when she relieved me as editor. It was also during the period 1991-92 that some major production changes occurred. We "graduated" from the traditional typesetting to the use of more up-to-date technology to satisfy our design and layout needs. After starting with John Hedges for about a year, we switched to Victoria Darnes in the fall of 1992 (No. 25) who continues to fulfill that need to this day.

As for the content of Issues 16 through 34, I can only say that each one seemed to take on "a life of its own" from beginning to end of the process, requiring several months to pass through the various stages from compilation of the material to dissemination of the final product. Noteworthy in all of this was the printing of the first annual Walter W. Ristow Prize essay in the fall of 1994 (Issue No. 32). In closing, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who authored papers, provided meeting write-ups, offered information about special events and occasionally sent in tid-bits from time to time to spice up the publication. And a very special thank you to Eric Wolf who could always be counted on to provide his timely "Recent Publications."

— Charles A. Burroughs

The need was seen in early 1991 to have an assistant editor, and Marianne McKee stepped in to help Charlie for about one year:

*My involvement with the Washington Map Society actually began with a fairly short duration as associate editor of The Portolan to assist Editor Charlie Burroughs. It was an opportunity to directly participate in the group, and I enjoyed helping Charlie find interesting cartographic events, such as the 1991 DeWitt Wallace exhibit of early maps in Williamsburg. Living in Richmond, it was an easy event to cover. Charlie's careful editing and expertise brought our journal well into the spotlight, and I enjoyed the experience.*

— Marianne McKee

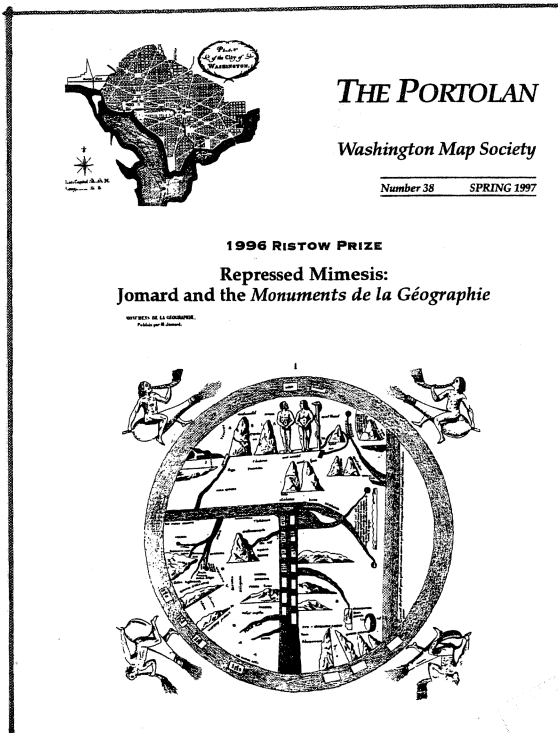
Then, in 1992, Jeanne Young became the assistant editor. Her service continued into 1996, when she became the Editor when Charlie Burroughs was no longer able to do the job as his business as a bookseller demanded more of his time. She continued as Editor through Winter 1996-1997.

*During my period as associate editor/editor of The Portolan, my greatest contribution was as associate editor when—at my insistence, I think it's fair to say—we went electronic. I recruited John Hedges and later, Vicki Darnes to do professional layout of our text and images. I think the relationship with Vicki has been to the satisfaction of three editors: Charlie, Tom Sander, and me. My other observation is that it is probably best if the editor of The Portolan is either retired or not engaged in full-time employment. The job deserves to be done well and to do it credit requires more time, especially during normal working hours, than full time employment permits. I could only do as much as I did because the other contributors were timely, thorough, and professional with their parts of the production. Vicki and I had arrange-*

ments that were worthy of spies for the "drop" and the "pick-up." Getting the publication in the mail was a family affair at our house, with our grandchildren contributing. I really look upon my year or so as editor as more of a caretaker role during which we got out a creditable publication at regular intervals. I remember gratefully handing it off to Tom Sander and appreciate that he enthusiastically took it on.

— Jeanne Young

Jeanne Young's reflection that full-time employment and *Portolan* editorship do not mix well together resulted in a search for a new Editor in the fall of 1996. John Docktor, then Society President, scanned the membership horizon, until he came upon willing candidate Tom Sander.



Shortly after returning to Washington from my final overseas posting and retiring from the Army in 1996, I began again attending meetings of the WMS. A member since 1990, I had enjoyed receiving *The Portolan* while I was overseas, and I was pleased to rejoin in the local activities. Then-president John Docktor asked if I would consider becoming the journal's next editor. Now with a bit more time available, it was time to contribute to the group from which I had benefited. I first chatted with past WMS editors and with editors of like journals elsewhere, then began my duties with the spring 1997 issue. There was a lot to learn – from dealing with authors and contributors, arranging for book reviews, insuring WMS meeting summaries were written and pre-checked with presenters prior to publication, finding a new printer (for the old one was in another state), learning postal regulations, to determining just how long each of these steps took so that the journal would enter the layout-printing-mailing systems in time to meet my distribution goals. Those steps are perhaps the most challenging if you want to produce a journal that appears on schedule. Since taking over the journal, the size has grown, indeed one issue reached 80 pages long, although that is not

a goal or new standard. Issue 44 saw our first use of color within the journal; it enhanced an article, but the production cost increased substantially. Color will remain the exception rather than the rule as to remain within budget.

Articles are very important for all readers. While some presenters or contributors give us a copy of their work, the stellar note taker and summarizer of our meetings has been Steve Vogel, without whose faithful and exacting work your journal would not be as good as it is today. Eric Wolf is another regular contributor, indeed his 'Recent Publications' began appearing in Issue number one. This valuable resource, listing articles and books on the history of cartography and related subjects, is a way to spot works that help you enhance your knowledge of your own collections. Owning a map or being expert in the subject is an ever-continuing search for new pertinent information presented by others. Bert Johnson, our past president and membership chairman, routinely contributes book reviews and summaries of his cartographic travels and the activities of the Texas Map Society, of which he is a Board Member. John Docktor, another past president and the Society's webmaster, is a regular reviewer of new materials received on CD-ROM. In addition to these four particular members, many other members routinely step forward to review books received, to contribute articles, to summarize meetings and field trips, and to provide information of interest to others. All Washington Map Society members and *Portolan* subscribers are greatly indebted to these contributors. Vicki Darnes has done the layout of *The Portolan* for nearly ten years – her skills are responsible for the appearance and readability of the journal. My daughter Kristin R.

*Sander has been a valuable counsel. Her assistance with the intricacies of graphics programs and Microsoft Office has contributed greatly to the quality of The Portolan.*


*The Internet age has opened vast horizons with access to the 'web.' With that in mind, the journal began with Issue 40 including a regular feature called 'Map Site Seeing' – readers can explore pages of URL's and find even more sites to expand their hobby. Related to that is the inclusion throughout the journal of URL's whenever available – so the reader can tour an exhibition via the Internet if unable to personally visit, or quickly access pertinent information.*

*The Portolan website has been enhanced with the inclusion of a listing and index of all the contents of every past Portolan – researchers looking for an article on a particular subject or by a particular author can find it quickly; the list and index can be downloaded as a paper copy for those who find that mode more convenient.*

*The Portolan has attracted nationwide and worldwide attention. Several years ago we registered the journal for its own ISSN number – an accepted coding that every journal, magazine or newspaper has; with it researchers can quickly identify us. The membership increase from 71 in 1984 to 250 in 2001 contains many members and subscribers outside the Washington area who cannot routinely attend our regular meetings. These out-of-area recipients find valuable and interesting information about the hobby; other than the commercial Mercator's World magazine, The Portolan is the only substantial nationwide US publication on the subject. Subscribers include renowned libraries at Harvard, Yale, the University of Texas at Arlington, and the New York Public Library. Several libraries have in the past two years ordered complete sets of back issues to complete their holdings – these include the Huntington Library, the Library of Virginia, the University of Michigan, Ohio State University, and the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. Overseas institutions receiving The Portolan include The British Library, the National Archives of Canada, and the Bibliotheque Royale Albert I in Belgium.*

*It is gratifying to be the editor of a journal that has received so much recognition and that is appreciated by the membership.*

—Thomas F. Sander



**THE PORTOLAN**


Journal of the  
Washington Map Society

Number 50    SPRING 2001

Our 50<sup>th</sup> Issue

**CONSERVATION FROM THE CURATOR'S  
AND COLLECTOR'S POINT OF VIEW**

by Patricia Molen van Ee



Anon. 't Eijland Curacao, ca. 1800.

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:**

*Principles of Collecting*, by John Hyman  
*The Portolan at 50*, by the Portolan Editors  
*The Alexandria Archaeology Museum*, by Norman Z. Cherkis  
*The Evolution of Geography and GIS: What it Means*, by Steven Vogel  
*The Depiction of Florida on the Early Conte Ottomano Fresco Map*, by Douglas T. Peck