## NYS GIS association

# November | December 2019 Newsletter

Hello NYS GIS Association Member!  Here's what's in the news...

- President's Holiday Message
- Meet Mary Susan Knauss, NYS GIS Association Board Member
- GIS Day Events
- Membership Renewal

Read on, enjoy, and Happy Holidays,
The NYS GIS Association Communications Committee

## President's Holiday Message
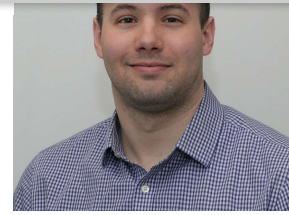
Dear Association Members,

I am excited and honored to serve as President of the NYS GIS Association and warmly wish you all a Happy Holidays! May you all enjoy time spent with family and friends this festive season and take time to reflect on a prosperous 2019.

I'd like to thank you all for your continued support of the Association, through time spent volunteering for special programming, attending events, and helping to build our mission. Your participation and efforts are significant in influencing how we serve our membership and New York State.

As we embark on another year, I am dedicated to supporting and growing the Association with your continued, impactful contributions!

Happy Holidays & New Years,

Jonathan Garner
President, NYS GIS Association

> ## Meet Mary Susan Knauss, NYS GIS Association Board Member

1. **What made you interested in taking up GIS/geospatial technology as a career and how did you end up in the field of GIS? What is your educational background?**



My GIS career started through a series of fortunate events.  The first was stumbling on SUNY Albany's fabulous GIS program. The grad certificate was the opportunity I needed to re-tool my career after thirty years in telecommunications and data networking. The next was a lifelong friend and neighbor, retired from the NYS DOT, who heard that the DOT were hiring. The last bit of luck was that DOT Planning in Poughkeepsie was specifically looking for someone with GIS skills and experience with asset management.

A physics degree from Bard College set me up to work for AT&T and Bell Laboratories. Geography, in the form of area codes, was literally hard-wired back then. Services were priced by distance, as the crow flies, but engineering documented the circuit routing through every piece of equipment from one side of the country to the other. One day I was on the phone with the San Francisco central office troubleshooting a circuit, when the scale of it all struck me. Technology went digital and the pace of innovation has been accelerating exponentially ever since. A critical program management milestone for implementation of the first gigabit fiber optic route was collecting operational data presentable to the network operations center. Taking a master's in information science at the University of Pittsburgh was my way of keeping up. I focused on decision making, communication, control, and command solutions in order to help the right hand know what the left was doing.

2. **Will you please explain your job and what you do there?**

In August, I finished my contribution to a long-running project at the NYS Department of Transportation. As a Senior Transportation Analyst in Planning

and Program Management, I helped develop inventories for roadside assets. While the DOT has engineering plans dating from the turn of the last century to today, there were no aggregate inventories beyond bridges and pavement.

Back in '07 I was approached by two Region 8 Design Engineers who wanted to add a Special Note to all guiderail and intelligent transportation systems contracts that would have all asset installations geolocated and collected in an inventory. A long learning curve began, and technology kept improving. As of this past summer the photo extraction of State roadside assets was completed and the roadside assets are now under management. Both state forces and contractors can access the NYSDOT ESRI Portal through MyNY.gov authentication and get access the inventories by browser or using Collector. The NYSDOT Office of Design is now drafting a new pay item to their Standard Specifications to make asset collection standard practice for all state contracts.

3. **How did you get involved in the Association? If you serve or have served on an Association committee, why did you decide to volunteer your time and what did you find most enjoyable about it?**

I was introduced to the Association through the listserve, GISNY-L (Thank you, New York State Library and NYS GIS Program Office.) At the SUNY program the address and the instructions to subscribe were passed from person to person. Successfully signing up brings the fun of getting the decoder ring to work. The listserv is the posting place, the kiosk for what is happening in the NYS GIS community. The first GeoSpatial Summit was announced there.

I joined the association because of the professional community. You can't master a subject in isolation. The standards for the GIS Professional certification recognize that actively participating in an association and reaching out to other organizations to share knowledge and concerns is essential. Keeping an organization going is a lot of work. The association has helped me and it is important to pay that forward.

While on the Legislative Committee several years ago I had the chance to advocate in Albany on survey legislation.  Enjoyable is not the word I'd use but it was fascinating. I have had the chance to attend regional events throughout the state, GIS/SIG in Pittsford, the Southern Tier after Irene, The Westchester User Group, and I am a member of GISMO. There is amazing work happening in the ecosystem across the state. I am looking forward to supporting Rick Reichert with his legislative efforts and Wai Chan's outreach for members.

4. **What's the most interesting project that you have worked on and why?**

This is a tough question. For me, it is always the last project.  Curiously with this last project, the business problem, to support provisioning and maintaining

assets in real time with an operations system that supports a dynamic workflow and talks to the accounting system, was like my very first information systems project in '82. The more things change, the more they stay the same. The demand for project management is secure.

There is a glory days project I love to talk about… when I was at Bell Labs in NJ, cue Springsteen and pour beverage of choice … come find me at the next conference!

5. **What is your favorite memory from NYGeoCon or the GeoSpatial Summit?**

There have been so many. I am a true fan.  It is the people, of course. The conversations are always engaging and there is that chance for a collaboration. A central mission of the organization is professional development and it succeeds brilliantly at this. That first GeoSpatial Summit at North Creek in 2006 was amazing. Front row seats on the leading edge of the wave, I have been an association member ever since.



> **10:00 – 12:00**
> **Future of the GIS Industry panel discussion featuring:**
>
> **Michael Jones** - Chief Technologist, Google Earth;
> **Tom Barclay** - Microsoft Virtual Earth Imagery Program Manager;
> **Richard Kaplan** - President and CEO of Pictometry;
> **Jay Benson** - VP of Business Development for TeleAtlas;
> **George Moon** - Chief Technology Officer for MapInfo;
> **Chris Cappelli** - Director, U.S. Sales ESRI;
> **Adena Schutzberg** - Executive Editor, Directions Magazine. Moderator;

In 2010, I was headed down the hall at Siena to Bryan McBride's open source class and caught sight of some old telecom equipment in a museum display. That could have been depressing, seeing diligently acquired skills now as useful as knowing how to make buggy whips.  Instead, I smiled. UNIX begats LINUX begets Open Source begets QGIS. And there was learning from Lis DeGironimo at her GeoCon talk about the use of the USNG for unique asset Ids and then bringing that best practice to the NYSDOT.

6. **What do you like most about mapping?**

I love all those marvelous degrees of information freedom. Making maps to access and exchange real time data is my favorite work but making maps to access archival and working records and documents is deeply satisfying. I share the goal of all reference librarians, to make all sorts of information accessible for all sorts of uses.  I like that a good map always tries to declare the limits to what it attests, HC SVNT DRACONES, "Beyond here be Dragons". I like that a useful map is at that challenging intersection of form and function.

Orbit the earth. I wanted to be an astronaut.

8. **Do you have any specific advice or philosophies from working in the GIS world?**

- I am taking Ben Houston's advice (July 2018 newsletter).
- Acronyms change, follow the ideas.
- *"So what do we do now?" "Probably stick together – for survival"*  Jurassic World

AT&T Network Operations Center



GIS Day 2019



There were a number of GIS Day events held around New York State. Below are just a few...

- CNYRGIS hosted a Mappy Hour at the Blue Tusk in Syracuse
- WNYGIS had speakers from FeedMore WNY, the NYS DEC, and Lucity at the Meals on Wheels WNY site followed by a Mappy Hour at Hydraulic Hearth in Buffalo.

- Cornell's Mapping Society sponsored lightning presentations, an exploration of a giant map of New York State, and a Mappy Hour at Cornell's Big Red Barn,
- Binghamton University – SUNY showcased posters and faculty research demos.

Thanks to all who hosted, sponsored, and participated in GIS Day 2019!

**Membership Renewal**

June 30th was the last day of the 2019 membership year. If you haven't done so already, take a moment to renew your membership now. Remember that you can renew for 5 years!

Use this link to
renew:   https://www.nysgis.net/joinus/join/login

Know someone who is not a member? Please spread the word. The more members we have, the stronger an organization we can become.

Students can join for free! Please note that student members need to renew yearly; the 5-year renewal option is not available for student members.

Use this link to join:  https://www.nysgis.net/joinus/