

Visual Impact

THIS MONTH'S special issue of *Oceanography* once again contains graphics that, in your editor's humble opinion, will knock your socks off. In particular, the three-dimensional images of Mediterranean continental margins are an outstanding example of how fortunate our discipline is in being able to describe its science in graphics. No longer does the reader need to understand how to interpret at a glance a bathymetric map, side-scan sonar image, or seismic reflection profile. In these fantastic graphics, the data jump off the page. They open up the world of continental margin geology and reveal its hidden beauty.

To appreciate just how far we've come in graphical representations of continental margins, I dusted off my copy of Francis P. Shepard's book *Submarine Geology* (2nd ed., 1963, Harper and Row, New York, 557 pp.), which had been handed down to me years ago by a lapsed geologist. It was fun to re-read the chapter on "Submarine Canyons, Deep Channels, and Other Marine Valleys" and review the 1963 state of the art in graphics (and in the science). To help the reader visualize the canyons, Shepard included bathymetric maps, three-dimensional sketches, and photos—all, of course, in black and white. Sure, the bathymetric maps might need a more-expert eye to decipher, but the power of even simple black and white line drawings can't be underestimated. How better

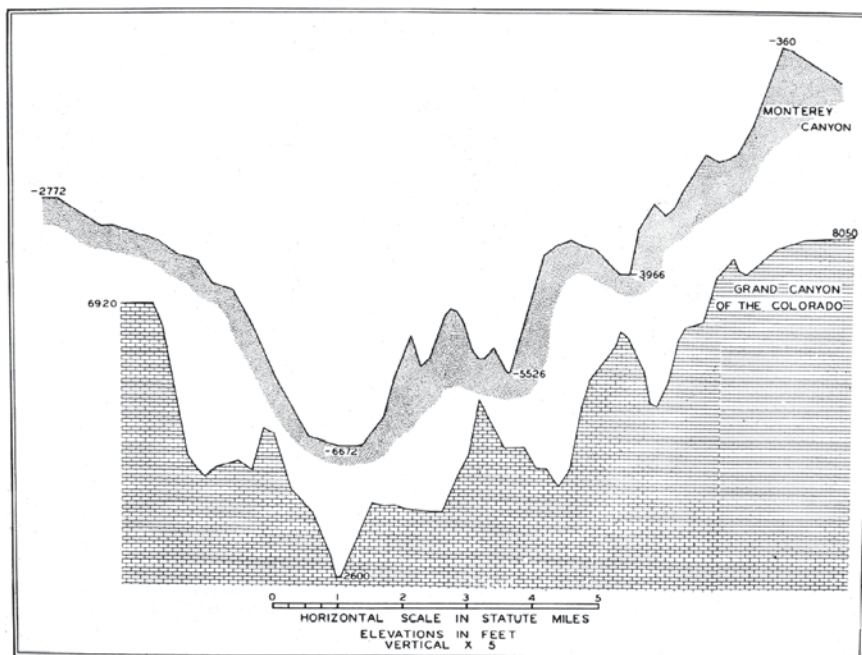
to give a reader the feel for a submarine canyon's dimensions than by comparing it, at the same scale, to the Grand Canyon (see figure)?

Still, while every picture tells a story, there's no question that contemporary graphics tell a better story more powerfully than even the best efforts from just a few decades ago. Even with all the tools at our disposal, however, producing good graphics takes a lot of effort and, many times, a bit of creativity. Because of this, you would like to have your graphics

printed where they will look best. I encourage you to consider *Oceanography* as a place to display your graphics and tell your scientific story. This issue shows just how nice color graphics can look.

I would like to thank all of the contributors to this issue for providing the ingredients that make this magazine so visually stunning.

Ellen S. Kappel
ELLEN S. KAPPEL, EDITOR



Transverse profile of Monterey Canyon compared with a section of the Grand Canyon. Graphic courtesy of NOAA Central Library, NOAA Coast and Geodetic Survey Historic Image Collection (available online at www.photolib.noaa.gov/historic/c&gs/theb3824.htm), and also pictured in Shepard (1963).