

Editorial

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EDITORIAL

This issue of *Geoscience Canada* marks the end of my four-year tenure as Editor-in-Chief. My replacement will be Brendan Murphy of Saint Francis Xavier University, and I want to most emphatically thank Brendan for his generous offer to undertake a commitment that will inevitably consume a large share of his spare time (assuming he has any!). In addition to the editorial change, 2012 will bring a major transition in how the journal is delivered to subscribers; that is, *Geoscience Canada* will go the route taken by many journals in recent years and become an online-only publication. For the journal, this obviously means reduced costs, but there are also advantages for the contributor and the subscriber; the former, because fees will no longer be applied for the reproduction of colour figures, and the latter because articles will be available online as soon as they are copyedited and typeset, with no delays associated with printing, or with trying to find a mix of articles to fill exactly 48 pages.

For this issue, we have assembled a collection of articles that epitomize the diversity of the journal's content, and how it reflects the many faces of geoscience in Canada. First, I am very happy to introduce, in this my last issue, a new series entitled 'Great Canadian Lagerstätten', which will inform readers of some examples of extraordinary fossil preservation within Canada's borders; the highlight of these articles, based on the first two papers, has to be the astoundingly detailed accompanying photographs that illustrate this remarkable preservation. For the uninitiated, *lagerstätten*, as explained by series Assistant Editors Graham Young and David Rudkin in their introductory piece, are "...fossil occurrences in which the interruption

of natural degradation pathways has permitted remains of exceptional anatomical detail, biological diversity, or abundance". Many thanks to Graham and Dave for their work in assembling this series (based on the Symposium at GeoCanada 2010); may it live long and prosper, and perhaps culminate in a GAC Reprint Series volume.

Other contributions in this issue include an article by Eileen Van der Flier-Keller describing geoscience outreach activities during the British Columbia Year of Science, Stephen Johnston's Presidential Address from the Ottawa GAC-MAC, a historical article by Ian Brookes on longtime GSC geologist Robert Bell's years at Queen's University, a review of the 'roadside geology'-type book, *Okanagan Geology South* by Jim Britton, and a report by Sarah Agosta and others on the Aquitard Hydrogeology Symposium held last June in Ottawa.

Geoscience Canada fills an important niche in geoscience publishing, and to my knowledge, there are no other journals quite like it. The above-mentioned diversity is an important aspect of the journal's appeal; this diversity ranges from the 'historical' and 'outreach-style' articles such as those appearing in this issue, to reviews in various geoscience disciplines written in a manner that is easily digestible to the non-specialist reader, to articles that focus on geoscience-related issues of interest to the Canadian earth science community and often, the general public. Of the latter, two from recent issues stand out – the article by Chris Barnes et al. on the Neptune Project (March 2011), and the article by Jacob Verhoef et al. on defining Canada's extended continental shelves (Law of the Sea Convention; June 2011).

To borrow a line from the

familiar American Public Broadcasting System pitch, "we can only continue to offer this kind of programming with your help". It is becoming increasingly difficult to ensure a steady stream of manuscripts for future issues, whether it involves establishing a new series or soliciting individual papers. However, considering the diversity (there's that word again) of our content, the list of potential contributors includes a large proportion of government and university geoscientists (and graduate students). As usual, the issue for most people is lack of time; yet I urge you, the reader, to think of *Geoscience Canada* for at least a short article to discuss your research project, describe an innovative technology, write a review, or expound on any other aspect of geoscience that may be of interest to the geoscience community-at-large. I'm sure our new Editor-in-Chief will be grateful for the help in reducing the burden of 'manuscript generation'.

Personally, the last four years have been hugely educational, occasionally stressful, always busy, and a wonderful opportunity to communicate with a large number of geoscientists, many of whom I will probably never meet. However, I have advised Brendan that I will be available to handle and edit some manuscripts, so my ties with the journal will not be completely severed. In conclusion, I could not sign off without thanking the staff of Assistant and Associate Editors, the production staff of Chris Pereira, Bev Strickland, Peter Russell and Jean-Alfred Renaud, GAC Publications Director Karen Dawe, and Sandra Barr, whose urging made my involvement with *Geoscience Canada* possible.

Reginald A. Wilson
December, 2011