

Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Beginning with this issue, I am pleased to accept the editorship of *Geoscience Canada*, following in the footsteps of a long line of distinguished past editors. With my arrival as editor comes a new panel of associate editors, mainly chosen and approached by Paul Robinson of GAC Council. I welcome these new associate editors, and will be depending on their talents to help ensure the continued success of the journal. Leslie King continues as our capable managing editor. For the first time in the history of *Geoscience Canada*, the editor and managing editor are located in distant cities, Calgary and Sudbury, respectively. We hope to surmount this geographic separation with electronic mail, fax machines and the telephone, with the odd visit of convenience. I am grateful for the support of the Geological Survey of Canada, Calgary, in taking on this challenge.

I go back a long way in GAC: I was a GAC Councillor when Gerry Middleton came to Council with the idea of establishing a general interest publication, *Geoscience Canada*. This concept was embraced enthusiastically by the GAC Council of the time (1973), and the resulting journal has been well received and has grown in stature and influence, both nationally and internationally. Perhaps the most useful function of the journal over the 22 years of its existence has been to make specialized research in the earth sciences accessible to the non-specialist. "We long for someone who will explain to us, in a few well-chosen words, what it all means," said Gerry Middleton in a 1978 editorial written at the end of his term as founder and first editor. The huge increase in the sheer volume of information of all sorts, geosciences included, makes the need to tell us "what it all means" greater than ever. So I anticipate that this well-established function will remain central to *Geoscience Canada*.

With the publication and distribution of this issue, *Geoscience Canada* moves closer to being back on track. Many readers will have noticed a gap in publication that began in 1994: this reflects a dearth of manuscripts along with the influence of cutbacks and downsizing in preceding editor Phil Thurston's environment. It seems that none of us is immune from the relentless efforts of organizations to atone in the 1990s for the supposed excesses of the 1970s and 1980s. When the gap in publication of *Geoscience Canada* persisted into 1995, GAC Council debated the future of *Geoscience Canada*, happily deciding that it has a future and renewing its mandate to continue.

Despite all the cutbacks and down-sizing that characterize the 1990s, there is a wealth of good geoscience work underway in this diverse, resource-rich country. Our mandate will remain that of bringing to you, our readers, some measure of the breadth and depth of geoscience in Canada in the 1990s, using the formats that have served us well. For the present, we expect to maintain the broad groupings of material to appear in *Geoscience Canada* as established by Phil Thurston in 1993. These are: **Articles** (full peer review) *i.e.*, Review Articles, Research Reports; **Issues in Canadian Geoscience** (full peer review) *i.e.*, Future Trends in the Earth Sciences, Geoscience Education Issues; **Series** (full peer

review) *i.e.*, Active Earth, History of Geology, Machinations; **Conference Reports; Reviews** *i.e.*, Book Reviews, Software Reviews, Video Reviews; **Commentary** *i.e.*, Pyroclasts; **Comment and Reply; Letters to the Editor**.

Geoscience Canada also has been particularly successful in its Series contributions, including Facies Models, Ore Deposit Models, and Diagenesis, all of which have become best-seller compendium volumes. *Environmental Geology of Urban Areas*, a recent Series contribution, will appear as a volume in 1996. We will continue to be receptive to suggestions for new Series such as these or updates of previous Series contributions where appropriate.

As noted by several earlier *Geoscience Canada* editors, peer review is essential to maintain the high quality of review articles, research reports, geoscience issues, and series papers. In my experience there are very few manuscripts indeed that cannot be improved by following the suggestions of knowledgeable and careful critical reviewers. Peer review also is important to our academic contributors in the evaluation of their research records in seeking continued funding. If you are asked to review a *Geoscience Canada* contribution, we hope that you will accept, and that your review will be thorough and prompt! Our continued health and success as a respected journal depends on this.

We live in a digital world. More than one regular *Geoscience Canada* reader has suggested to me that GAC stop paper publication of the journal, and go on-line on the World Wide Web. We will certainly be looking at this option, considering following the lead of journals such as *The Astrophysical Journal*, which is now disseminated digitally. The supposed financial savings in doing this may not be large, however, as there is commonly a demand among users that a journal continue to be produced in paper form as well as in electronic form. My sense is that the earth science community is not yet ready to make the transition to a digital format for *Geoscience Canada*: what are your views? In the final analysis, it is the users of journals like this one whose needs should be central in determining whether the future lies in digital or traditional formats, or in some combination of both.

In forthcoming issues we hope to bring you papers on a broad range of topics including a NUNA conference on the Arctic environment, porphyry deposits in the Canadian Cordillera, estimating the mineral potential of British Columbia, kimberlites in the Northwest Territories, metals in the environment, progress in LITHOPROBE, and the future of the Geological Survey of Canada. Meanwhile, unsolicited manuscripts are always welcome; reviews, research reports and Series papers will be refereed as noted.

Geoscience Canada has a history of success; it has a tradition of providing high-quality information across the earth sciences; and it has a renewed mandate from the 1996 GAC Council to continue. This is GAC's journal, but it is also your journal: to thrive, it needs your continued support. We look forward to receiving your contributions!

Roger Macqueen