

# EDITORIAL

This 'Ward Neale tribute issue' on geoscience outreach in Canada was first suggested (by Christy Vodden, I believe) not long after Ward's passing in spring of 2008, as a fitting tribute to Ward's career and his commitment to geoscience education. Outreach is a subject that every geoscience society has, over the last 10 to 20 years, made a commitment toward, or even declared as a priority, recognizing that an increased understanding by the general public of the importance of geoscience in their daily lives will ultimately benefit all fields of our profession. With this special issue, *Geoscience Canada* acknowledges the importance of this topic by publicizing some of the great variety of activities that fall under the outreach umbrella, and the individuals and groups that are largely responsible for these efforts in Canada.

Ward Neale was a champion of educating the public about geology before it was called 'geoscience outreach', and for many years he had relatively little company with whom to share his enthusiasm. The reader may learn the details of Ward's seminal contributions in the introductory article by Godfrey Nowlan; suffice it to say here that the example set by Ward is carried forward today by members

of the Canadian Geoscience Education Network (CGEN), now the 'outreach arm' of the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences. CGEN is a thriving organization of dedicated and resourceful volunteer geoscientists (see the article by Christy Vodden), whose members are responsible for virtually all of the contributions to this issue.

It is not often that an editor has the pleasure of dealing with an all-star cast of authors such as those presented herein. I have especially benefited from the very active participation of Fran Haidl, *Geoscience Canada* Associate Editor for outreach matters, who contributed mightily to this project, and Al Donaldson, Assistant Editor for our relatively new series on Geoheritage (see *Geoscience Canada* Vol. 35, No. 2). Some of the contributions appearing here were originally submitted specifically for our geoheritage series (and are noted as such); however, geoheritage is clearly an aspect of outreach and those articles are a good fit within the context of this issue. In addition to Fran and Al, thanks are extended to Christy Vodden and to Eileen Van der Flier-Keller for their assistance in seeing this project to completion. Significantly, Fran, Christy, Eileen, and three other contributors to this issue (Dixon

Edwards, Peter Russell, and Godfrey Nowlan) are all former winners of the GAC's E.R. Ward Neale Medal.

Unfortunately, the journal is unable to accommodate, in a single issue, all of the manuscripts that have been submitted for our 'outreach edition'; two articles have therefore been deferred to a later time. I extend my apologies to these authors for the postponement, and the reader may look forward to Scott Swinden's article on the Canadian Geological Foundation, and Randy Miller's article on 'Geoscience Heritage in New Brunswick', in upcoming issues of *Geoscience Canada*. Lest further remarks on my part force the postponement of yet another article, I will close this brief editorial and allow the reader to discover the people and organizations behind geoscience outreach in our country. To conclude, I will add that all of the articles in this issue will be made available for free download on the GAC® website, so that non-GAC® members, teachers, students, etc., can take advantage of some of the ideas and resources discussed in this issue.

Reginald A. Wilson