

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first online-only edition of Geoscience Canada (GC). This 'new' format allows for a fundamental change in the way in which we can serve the geoscience community. The online-only edition offers a lot more freedom in the quantity and quality of geoscience that we can publish. Essentially, I would like the content of Geoscience Canada to encompass all aspects of our professional and/or academic lives. Each day, our work balances research, use of analytical facilities, student issues (undergraduate and graduate), research funding issues, as well as outreach and (for some of us), teaching. In addition, for many of us, geoscience involves field work, and some of our most memorable and instructive moments in our careers occur with our colleagues in the field. So when you browse a Geoscience Canada issue, you should see publications and information that touch all aspects of your career.

Research Articles: These articles will continue to have a prime place in Geoscience Canada, but the change from print to 'online only' allows us to publish more articles per issue, provide more colour content for figures, all at a much lower cost to the author. We publish research articles on any aspect of the geosciences. Some are stand-alone articles, as is typical of most journals. As regular readers will vouch, we also publish articles as part of a series. Over the past several years, for example, we have published many successful series of articles on Economic Geology, Climate and Energy, Geology and Wine, Great Mining Camps of Canada, Igneous Rock Associations, Remote Sensing and, most recently Lagerstätten. These series will continue (see the Behnia et al, a contribution to

the Remote Sensing series). If you wish to contribute to any one of those series, please contact either myself, or a member of the team responsible for those series (please see list of names on the masthead). Also, if you have an idea for a new series of articles, please contact me directly.

To take maximum advantage of our new reality, I have instigated 'Hutchinson Medal' and 'Logan medal' articles, by inviting recent recipients of these prestigious awards to contribute an overview article based on their research. There has been an extraordinarily positive response I am confident that we will have 10 such articles over the next year or so. The authors invited are at the very top in their field, and collectively, they will cover a wide range of topics. Their articles are intended to reach a broad spectrum of geoscientists, not just specialists in their disciplines.

In addition, there will be a new series entitled "Geology and Google Earth", and we welcome Declan de Paor to the editorial board who will be the Assistant Editor in charge of this series. Declan has been at the forefront of this topic ever since Google Earth was released, and this series will take maximum advantage of our new online-only status. For an example, check out the Boggs et al. article, and if you have any potential contributions, please contact either me or Declan and we would be pleased to discuss them with you. The potential for this series is enormous; it is limited only by our imaginations.

Another series will focus on Great Geological Debates, in which controversial and important issues in the geosciences will be debated by leading geoscientists with opposing views. The target readership is the cur-

rent crop of graduate students, but it is probable that these debates will be of great interest to all. The idea is to identify key controversies, to let them breathe and possibly to stimulate new research initiatives that may tackle some of these controversies. The exact format is under discussion but there should be examples of these debates published later this year. I really hope this format will be attractive to graduate student seminar courses and stimulate discussions over morning coffee. If you have ideas for such debates, I would be pleased to entertain them.

There are several more exciting initiatives in the works. The details are not completely resolved yet, but expect some surprises to appear in forthcoming issues!

Analytical Facilities: Geoscience Canada is initiating a series of articles on Modern Analytical Facilities in the geosciences. Assistant Editors Chris MacFarlane (UNB), Bob Linnen (UWO) and Keith Dewing (GSC-Calgary) have agreed to spearhead this initiative. It is important for us (and our graduate students) to keep abreast of developments in analytical techniques, their availability not just in Canada, but around the world. You may have brand new analytical facilities whose capabilities you feel should be better known or understood. If so, then this new initiative may be a way to inform the broad geoscientific community. Chris MacFarlane has produced a wonderful example of the types of article we would like to publish under this initiative.

The Hoffman Pages: Paul Hoffmann needs no introduction. As a researcher of the highest stature, and he has gar-

nered a host of the most prestigious national and international awards for his research. Paul is also a passionate student and disciple of the history and philosophy behind the development of fundamental concepts in the geosciences. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of how these concepts developed and will contribute a column, aptly entitled *Tooth of Time*, to each issue of *Geoscience Canada*. It cost me two bottles of wine at a GSA conference in Minneapolis to arm-twist him into these contributions, but I am sure you will agree it was worth the investment! (In truth, Paul is an enthusiastic contributor, and I drank my fair share of the wine anyway!). His column will breathe life into some of the outstanding characters with brilliant insights have laid the foundations of our discipline. This issue contains the first of many fascinating narratives of how major discoveries are made, the amazing characters to whom we owe so much, and the importance of mentorship as transformative ideas are handed from generation to generation.

Student Issues: Students are the future of our science and it is so important for us to be familiar with student issues and as well as mentorship. The most obvious data that are of interest to us all are the undergraduate and graduate student enrolment trends, as well as employment needs and opportunities. The Council of Chairs of Canadian Earth Science Departments (CCCESD) has agreed to submit one article per year that includes the latest enrolment statistics and trends as well as a discussion of them and other pertinent issues. By opening up this channel of communication, many other global issues affecting Earth Science Departments can also be discussed.

Research Funding: Many of us require research funds to do the work we do, which primarily come from government agencies or industry. These funds not only facilitate our own research programs, they are the lifeblood for our students, the next generation of researchers. I am trying to set this up, and the format has yet to take shape. My goal is to have this initiative set up by the first issue of next year.

Any suggestions are welcome!

For those of us who work in universities, NSERC remains a prime source of funds for curiosity-driven research. NSERC also have several well established funding vehicles for projects liaise with industry and/or that train students. I am in the process of opening up a line of communication with NSERC, so that we can get some report on each years' competition statistics, issues that arose during the various competitions, advice they may give to future applicants, and new programs that they would like to draw attention. Of course some of this information is available in generic form on NSERC's website, but it would be advantageous to get some information from NSERC that is flavoured for geoscientists. Our online format would allow us to have an ongoing public conversation with NSERC. Similarly, I think we should learn about the culture of granting agencies in other countries, and I will be inviting geoscientists in other countries to provide insights into research funding in other jurisdictions.

For those of us who work in federal or provincial governments, I hope *Geoscience Canada* can be a means of communicating existing and new initiatives to the general geoscience community. I would like to use our new online status as a means of open-channel communication between all the partners interested in these funding opportunities to develop similar lines of communication there. As my own background is university based, my own experience of funding issues in government agencies is somewhat limited and so if anyone has any ideas how to proceed, or wants to help "get there from here", I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Field Trips: How often do we hear about field trips too late for us to participate in? To help remedy this, there will be a section on field trips where leaders can provide a brief summary of a forthcoming field trip. For example, over the next few years, summaries of field trips associated with the forthcoming GACMAC meetings will be published in either the December or March issue of *Geoscience Canada*, so that our readers can make informed choices in time for the May GACMAC

meeting. But we are interested in publishing field trip guides that are of general interest. So if you have run field trips for a GAC section, or other informal trips that you think would be of general interest, please contact me. Also, note that our new online status means that colour contributions are free and we can also handle movies from these trips.

Outreach has always been, and will continue to be, a very important part of *Geoscience Canada* publications. We are blessed in Canada by having many geoscientists who are dedicated to promoting the knowledge and understanding of our science to the general public. Fran Haidl has assembled a really dynamic team for our editorial board (see masthead) and will be actively soliciting contributions. These articles in the past have been outstandingly successful, and I have every confidence that this high standard will continue.

Teaching Tips: I would like to develop a forum where we can share and exchange teaching tips, especially tips on those concepts that are so hard for students to understand. The format for this is being developed, and hopefully something will be in place by the end of 2012.

Geoscience Canada Profile: I hope that the initiatives outlined above, plus a few more that I am keeping under my sleeve for now, will further enhance the stature of *Geoscience Canada* and make it an attractive venue for you to consider as a national outlet for the various activities in your career. Our articles are listed in the Web of Knowledge and Google Scholar. You will notice that *Geoscience Canada* will have a higher profile at GACMAC meetings. I have asked the LOCs of future GACMACs (Winnipeg 2013, Fredericton 2014) if *Geoscience Canada* can sponsor a session with invited presentations from authors of recent and forthcoming *Geoscience Canada* articles (sorry, I was too late in contacting the LOC for St. Johns 2012).

I am in the process of reorganizing the personnel and the structure of the GC Editorial Board. I am also broadening the scope of the edi-

torial board to include to international members. There is absolutely no reason why Geoscience Canada cannot become a world-class publication with articles of interest to the entire geoscience community. We know that geology pays no heed to national borders. In that spirit, neither should the dissemination of geoscience knowledge. It will take a while to get there, but I hope you can contribute to the cause. I am open to any suggestions you have that might improve Geoscience Canada as a publication.

In closing, I would like to thank outgoing Geoscience Canada editor, Reg Wilson, New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources, for his sterling efforts and the valuable advice he has given to me during the transition. Over the past four years, Reg has given freely of his time and expertise. He has worked tirelessly to promote and enhance the stature of Geoscience Canada, and helped shape its niche among the many outlets we have for geoscience publications. I am delighted that Reg has agreed to stay on as a Copy Editor (joining Roger MacQueen and Rob Raeside), which will allow me to continue to pick his brains, as well as to get him to do all sorts of tasks that he has yet to suspect! These guys are going to be busy!

J. Brendan Murphy

*St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish,
Nova Scotia, Canada, B2G 2W5
bmurphy@stfx.ca*

