

EDITORIAL

Welcome to this issue of *Geoscience Canada*, the first of the Geological Association of Canada's 50th anniversary year, 1997. Happy 50th, GAC! In its 50-year history GAC has many accomplishments to be proud of, and it continues to be a collective voice for, and a vigorous advocate of, the earth sciences in Canada. Past issues of *Geoscience Canada* demonstrate some of the success of GAC, as well as the breadth and depth of the earth sciences in Canada.

With this issue, *Geoscience Canada* begins its 24th year of publication. This is the "Gerry Middleton commemorative issue," with the presentation of six papers from a Geological Society of America symposium held in 1996 in honor of Gerry's move to Emeritus status at McMaster University last year (there's nothing retiring about Gerry). Rick Cheel and Dale Leckie, two of Gerry's former Ph.D. students, organized the papers included here, which reflect the range and scale of modern sedimentological research from gigantic ocean-floor fans to the formation of sedimentary structures in laboratory flumes. There are also three book reviews by Gerry in this issue.

We are honoring Gerry Middleton because he is the founder and first editor (1974-1978) of *Geoscience Canada*. For those of you who don't know him, the cherubic face looking back at you is Gerry's. In this composite creation by Tom Saunders of the University of Alberta, Gerry is surrounded by some of the geological elements of his career: clockwise from top right are Paleozoic turbidites (Quebec Appalachians?), modern ripple marks, convoluted beds, flute casts, Paleozoic corals, and tidal environments of the Bay of Fundy, all topics that have captured the attention of this gifted observer of the natural environment. Missing is any reference to *Geoscience Canada*, one of Gerry's signal achievements. On examination of the first five years of *Geoscience Canada*, I am struck by how well the journal fulfilled Gerry's plan to publish general-interest articles about the earth sciences in Canada, written at a technical level that can be understood by non-specialists in other branches of the earth sciences. This is still our mandate, and is as valid today as in 1974. Well done, Gerry: we are permanently in debt to you for establishing this journal and setting the high standard that we aspire to maintain.

We live in interesting times. As I write this, the "Red Sea" in Manitoba has begun to recede, and our friends in Winnipeg who hosted the fine GAC-MAC meeting last year have begun cleaning up after nature's rampage. This year's Red River ram-

page — sedimentology with a vengeance — is the worst of this century, demonstrating again that modern man has a limited ability to deal with nature's unexpected events. What is "unexpected" depends on the time frame, and this is something that the earth sciences offer: a more representative time frame, in terms of what really happens in nature, that can be decades or millennia in length. Many see the presentation of such a geological perspective of nature as an opportunity if not a duty and a responsibility to society; our future as a species may depend on it. In a longer term perspective, floods like the 1997 Red River flood would be seen as inevitable even though they are infrequent, and settlement patterns would reflect such events. Meanwhile, the national outpouring of human and financial help in Manitoba flood relief efforts is heartwarming.

At the same time as we are awash in news of the Manitoba floods, we are also awash in news of Bre-X, the gigantic gold mine that never was. It is still early days in terms of understanding what happened at Busang, the Bre-X property in Indonesia. Here in Canada, however, there is the immense success of the two Canadian-based mining ventures of the 1990s: diamonds in the Lac de Gras area, NWT, and the wondrous Voisey's Bay nickel deposit in Labrador. Lac de Gras and Voisey's Bay remain as success stories; they are real, not imaginary. The next issue of *Geoscience Canada* will include a fine summary paper on Slave Province kimberlites and diamond potential by Jennifer Pell, and the following issue of *Geoscience Canada* will include a paper on the Voisey's Bay deposit by Bruce Ryan, 1997 Howard Street Robinson GAC Lecturer. These are continuing mining success stories, and it is well to remember them to keep the Bre-X event in perspective. Canada will continue to be a major source of geological expertise, venture capital, and mining know-how, no matter what the ultimate verdict on Bre-X.

I want to close by acknowledging the help I receive in editing this journal. Our talented Managing Editor, Leslie King, is responsible for the layout and look of the journal; all I and the associate editors do is seek out contributions, so far with success. Peter Russell provides us with those great diagrams at the beginning of each article. Thanks Peter! At GSC Calgary I am particularly grateful for the computer skills of Mrs. Billie Chiang of the Regional Geology Group, the photographic skills of Bryan Rutley, and the continued support of Grant Mossop, Director of GSC Calgary, and Ashton Embry, Head of the Calgary Regional Group. Thanks everyone. GAC owes you, and so do I.

Roger Macqueen

