

## President's Report 2008

The Halifax meeting of the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences will be my fourth and last as President. The Quebec City meeting in November 2006, ably facilitated by Simon Hanmer and Jeff Packard, marked the transition of the Canadian Geoscience Council into the revitalized CFES. The spring 2007 meeting in Vancouver cemented that transition with the adoption of a new Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles and a revised set of by-laws. The following meeting in Toronto was characterized by a great sense of progress as the various sub-committees reported on the accomplishments and initiatives. The Halifax meeting should see the fruition of at least two of those initiatives; the Geoscience employment survey, with responses representing more than 4000 Earth scientists across all jurisdictions and sectors, and the Careers in Earth Science website, part of a planned legacy from the International Year of Planet Earth, a comprehensive Canadian Earth sciences website at EarthSciencesCanada.com. In addition, the meeting will discuss the Earth Science Advocacy and Advisory panel, the Geoscience of Climate Change conference being held this fall in Banff with the GAC, CSPG and Royal Society of Canada, and the GeoCanada 2010 conference which will have CFES as a sponsoring organization.

With these and other achievements, there is quite a lot to look back on with some satisfaction. At the recent CSPG-CSEG-CWLS conference, however, I was struck by two excellent but very different talks. The first was by Dr. Andrew Miall, President of the Royal Society of Canada and Chairman of the Climate Change conference, who discussed with his wife Dr. Charlene Miall, the findings of their recent survey of the attitudes and perceptions of Earth Scientists. The second was by Derek Evans, President of Focus Energy Trust, on the subject of "Is Your Future Unconventional?" Both presenters in very different ways stressed the importance of Earth scientists finding their voice. This is the central *raison d'être* of CFES, and in this regard there remains a lot of work to be done. It is not a simple problem, and is one that needs to be addressed on all levels; national, provincial and local. The Earth Science Advocacy and Advisory Panel, the Nuna-Gussow Climate Change Conference, the partnership with IYPE, the Earth science employment survey, the Careers in Earth science website and a number of other priority items for CFES are all primarily concerned with raising the profile of Earth science and getting the message of Canadian Earth scientists heard.

At the conclusion of the GAC Presidential address at this year's GAC/MAC conference in Quebec City, Lyn Anglin was asked "How do we get the important message that Earth scientists have to the 99.99% of the population who aren't Earth scientists?" CFES will know it is a truly successful organization when the automatic response to that question is "that is what CFES is doing" or ideally, the question no longer needs to be asked.

The good news is that the willingness to collaborate that I saw among Canada's Earth science organization before I accepted the position has, if anything, strengthened. Any success in advancing an Earth science agenda depends on that collaboration. In this regard, as I prepare to hand over the reins to Bill Mercer, the President-Elect, I am very

optimistic. That is not to say that there will not be significant challenges. While I believe that the International Year of Planet Earth will provide CFES with a financial boost as well as a legacy of high quality and high profile Outreach, securing the financial foundation that will enable CFES to have the impact that it is capable of, will probably be the single most significant challenge.

As I transition to the Past President role, I would like to acknowledge the Board and staff for all their hard work, advice and enthusiasm. The majority of those involved with CFES are volunteers, (and those that aren't, generously charge far less than their normal stipend) and it takes a tremendous commitment and dedication to makes progress. Thank you.