

GSA Today: *Twenty Years...*



...and Counting!

Over the past twenty years, *GSA Today* has provided high-quality science articles, commentary, and Society news to GSA members. Now in its twenty-first year, *GSA Today* reaches more than 23,000 print subscribers and online readers.

GSA Today was first printed under this title in 1991. Its roots—*The Geologist Newsletter* and *GSA News & Information*—began as offshoots of the Society's flagship journal, *GSA Bulletin*. Until 1961, the news of the Society, including presidential addresses and meeting abstracts and proceedings, was published as part of *GSA Bulletin*. As *GSA Bulletin* evolved into a science-only journal, GSA leadership felt the need to create a new print outlet for GSA news and meetings information.

The first iteration of a separate GSA news bulletin was *The Geologist Newsletter*. This four-page periodical was published from 1966 to 1981. As GSA membership and Society activities grew, the newsletter increased to 20 pages and was renamed, fittingly, *GSA News & Information*. Additional meeting details, the tables of contents for *Geology* (which launched in 1973) and *GSA Bulletin*, and such topics as GSA's outreach endeavors in education, could now be highlighted.

GSA continued to grow, and so did its publications. In November 1990, *GSA News & Information* announced a major retooling, including a new title, *GSA Today*, along with a redoubled effort to keep readers informed about Society news, geoscience policy and legislation, and, the core of the society, its science. Thus, the most important change of all: the addition of a science article. *GSA Today's* first science article (Jan. 1991, v. 1, no. 1, p. 1, 3–4) was Donald L. Turcotte's "Fractals in geology: What are they good for?" The first science and

forum editors were Eldridge M. Moores and Bruce F. Molnia, respectively. In his introduction, Molnia wrote, "This inaugural issue ... represents a major step forward from the monthly newsletter of the past" (p. 2), the result, noted then GSA Executive Director F. Michael Wahl, of "more than two years of deliberation by GSA Council" (p. 2).

For the first five years, *GSA Today* was printed and distributed in tabloid format. In 1996, *GSA Today* editorial and production staff opted to drop the tabloid layout in favor of a more user-friendly magazine-sized product.

The next major change came in January 2001, when *GSA Today's* production manager, Margo Good, refined the design of the magazine. Each issue would now feature a striking science-article-related image on the front cover with room for full-page advertising on the inside and back covers. This would in turn provide support for an increase in the quality and number of color graphics. Best of all, the new design meant that the science article could run on consecutive pages, rather than beginning on the front cover and jumping to additional pages inside the issue.

In 2006, to strengthen the magazine's science and policy content, *GSA Today* science co-editors Keith Howard and Gerry Ross added a new article series called "Groundwork." This series would offer authors a platform for short, hot-topic or issue-driven articles to *lay the groundwork* for furthering the influence of earth science on education, policy, planning, and funding. Groundwork articles span such topics as "Advocates for cold-blooded dinosaurs: The new generation of heretics," published in 2007 (v. 17, no. 1, p. 45–46); "Accreditation: Wrong path for the geosciences" (2008, v. 18, no. 10, p. 52–53); and "Geological mapping goes 3-D in response to societal needs" (2010, v. 20, no. 8, p. 27–29).

Another addition to *GSA Today* is the "Geologic Past" series (beginning in 2005), which highlights and summarizes science articles and presidential addresses in *GSA Bulletin*, dating back to the beginning of the Society (1888; the first issue of *GSA Bulletin* was published in 1890). Examples of Geologic Past articles include "When the Continents Crept Away" ([1910], 2005, v. 15, no. 7, p. 29); "Geology of the World War and After" ([1919], 2009, v. 19, no. 3, p. 10); "The Problem of Petroleum" ([1939], 2009, v. 19, no. 6, p. 13); and "The Role of Minerals in the Present International Situation" ([1939], 2009, v. 19, no. 8, p. 28). The intent of this series is to bring to the reader's attention GSA's leadership in quality science publications even into the early years of the Society as well as to show that *GSA Bulletin* articles remain relevant today.

GSA's mission is "to be a leader in advancing the geosciences, enhancing the professional growth of its members, and promoting the geosciences in the service to humankind and stewardship of the Earth." Part of this mission is directly tied to education. Teachers and college instructors report that they often use *GSA Today* science articles, which are open-access and online back to 1995, in the classroom because they are written to be understood by a broad audience and