

Dear Readers:

If you wish to refresh your confidence in the relevance of our field, you might want to check out a website reference sent to us recently. Given its length, you will find it in single column format at the bottom of this page. The article appeared in the Washington Post. Allowing that it is a non-scientific newspaper report, it tells of the severe AMD pollution of a stream in western Maryland (USA) due to the overflow of rebounding groundwater in a mine that closed in the 1940's. A recent surge in AMD and consequent rapid drop of pH to 2.5 has been attributed to the possible collapse of a section of the mine. Limited knowledge of the underground conditions, limited technology to deal with the issue, and limited funding for remedial action, all make the problem more difficult. Interestingly, the affected stream is part of the headwaters of the Potomac River (for our non-U.S. readers, the Potomac River runs through the heart of Washington DC, within sight of the U.S. Capitol).

By coincidence, one of us (Colin) was in western Maryland this summer, in connection with a longwall mine that is currently closing down and will begin to flood. Water from the mine is currently being used to supply a trout hatchery, while drainage from another underground mine nearby is being nicely treated before entering the upper Potomac. So, in the space of a couple of counties we have an example of a nasty mine water problem that is a legacy from the past and a scientific challenge for the present; a just-beginning case where we aren't quite sure how the rebound is going to behave; and the application of current technology to help fix ongoing drainage problems. What more could you want from a field of study?

Well, maybe an island in the Mediterranean to visit – so how about Sardinia next May? Check out the detailed information on the IMWA Symposium 2007 via the IMWA website ([www.imwa.info](http://www.imwa.info)). The abstract deadline is February 10, 2007, the range of topics is wide, and the location is fascinating.

Congratulations to Dr. Christian Wolkersdorfer, the Secretary General of IMWA and associate editor of this journal. He has been very busy. During the last

few months, he had his Habilitation Thesis approved (unanimously), and accepted and already started a new job as Chair of the Department of Hydrogeology and Environmental Geology at the University of Munich.

Meanwhile, in this issue of the journal, we have a varied mixture of papers written from very different perspectives on a wide variety of topics from authors that span the globe: an artificial neural network to predict cadmium removal, reclamation of coal waste, use of pit lakes, remote sensing, stream remediation, and three biologically oriented articles, one examining the cell biology of fish and invertebrates affected by mine drainage, and two examining different aspects of microbiology. It is another illustration of the diversity of our field, and our readership. Whether we got into mine water or mine hydrology via geology or hydrology, mining or chemical engineering, chemistry or biology, we have a truly interdisciplinary area – which is partly what makes it so interesting!

For those of you who are wondering when the long promised special issue on mine water rebound will be published, do not give up hope. The first two individuals who offered to organize it both got overwhelmed with other responsibilities, but a third member of IMWA, Dr. Catherine Gandy (e-mail: [c.j.gandy@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:c.j.gandy@ncl.ac.uk)) has offered to shoulder the load of organizing it. If you wish to contribute to this special issue, please contact Catherine or us as soon as possible. We would like to publish articles addressing all of the various aspects of the rebound issue, and to have many mining regions represented; ideally, this will overflow into more than one issue, just as our special issue on mine water in Europe did. However, Catherine will need your help; please contact researchers and practitioners who you know are working in this important area of research and encourage them to submit manuscripts.

Thanks to all our contributors and our excellent reviewers. Keep your articles coming, and enjoy yourselves during this holiday season.

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