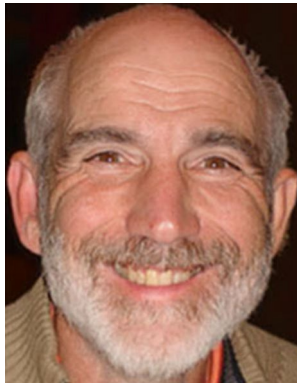




Dear Readers

Bob Kleinmann¹

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Dear Reader,

I hope you are well, and that you and your family have not been adversely affected by COVID-19. Quite a few of you have written to ask if I am alright, and I can assure you that my family and I are all well. In addition, as far as I know, none of this journal's editors nor translators have fallen victim to the disease. Statistically though, at least some IMWA members and their family members have likely been affected—please continue to reach out and communicate with members of this extended IMWA family and let some of us know if you need help. And feel free to go to the IMWA website: www.IMWA.info and reach out via Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn (though I must confess that I have never used Twitter myself).

IMWA and this journal have had to adapt, like all of you have, to this pandemic. With respect to the Association, the decision was made to postpone the 14th IMWA Congress in New Zealand, which had been scheduled for November 2020. Since the 2021 conference site was already selected

(Wales), New Zealand will now be hosting their rescheduled meeting in November, 2022.

The organizers had to decide whether or not to postpone the 2020 meeting before too much money was irrevocably committed, even though no one can reasonably predict whether or not there will be a second wave of illness in a few months or not. On top of that, there was also the obvious concern that people might be afraid to travel before they are vaccinated for this disease. The possibility of holding the conference virtually was considered, but ultimately rejected. However, if you were one of those individuals who was scheduled to write a paper, you are encouraged to do so anyway—IMWA will publish the IMWA 2020 proceedings electronically, and all of you will be able to download the papers for free, just as you can download all papers from past conferences. They are available at the IMWA website: www.IMWA.info/proceedings.

With respect to this journal, the pandemic has caused us to make some changes as well, such as allowing reviewers and authors more time to respond to deadlines in case of illness or pandemic-related factors. In addition, we were forced to delay the publication of the special issue on pit lakes once more, even though most of those papers have already been published on-line. The last few were still not finalized, but I can absolutely promise you that they will all appear in the September issue. So, instead, this issue contains all 20 papers that have been published on-line since our March issue, not earmarked for the pit lakes special issue.

Looking forward, we on the editorial staff are struggling with a big unknown—whether our submission numbers will decline this year or next, given that many research projects have been stalled by the pandemic and thesis work has been put on hold at many universities. That would be a major change—we have had a continuous increase in submissions each year for over two decades now. Or perhaps we will see more submissions, as individuals with more time on their hands start to write up work that has been on the back burner for a while. And perhaps we will see more papers from mining company practitioners who also have more time on their hands. That would be wonderful! But only time will tell.

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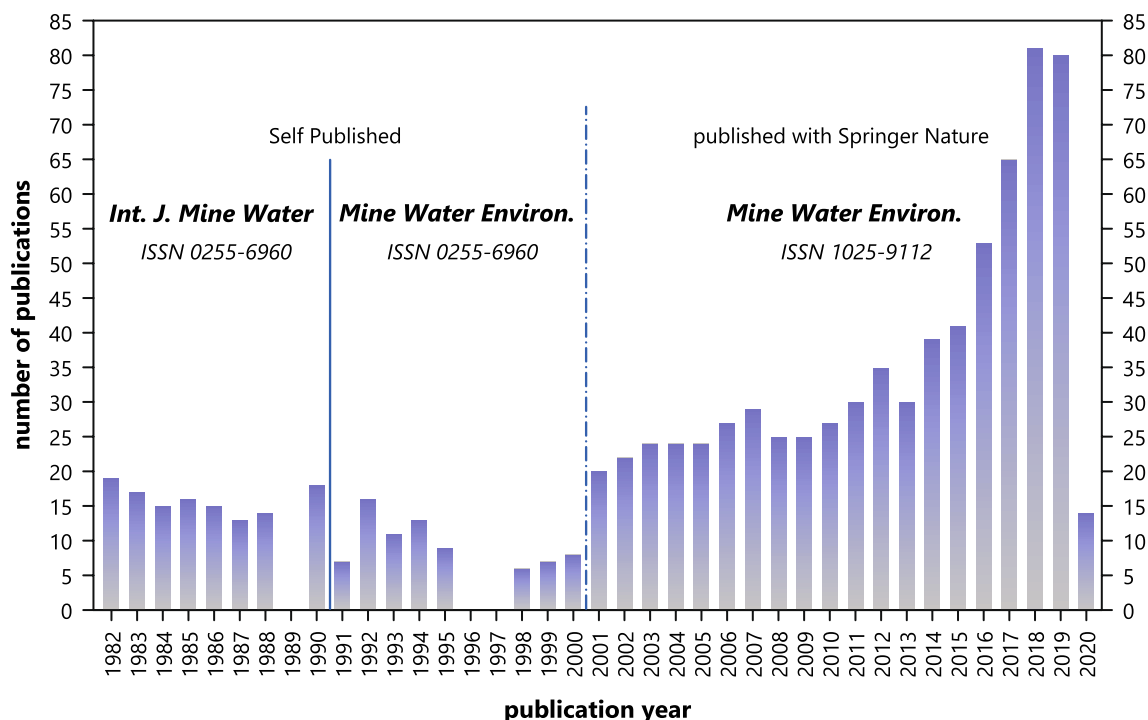


Fig. 1 Annual number of published articles (total is 948 as of 2020-05-02) in the International Journal of Mine Water (Int. J. Mine Water) and Mine Water and the Environment (Mine Water Environ.) since its first issue in 1982, excluding editorial columns, such as this one

Meanwhile, in case the discussion on submissions made you wonder, we publish substantially less than half of the papers submitted to us. This is, to a large extent, due to the fact that many submitted manuscripts are not related to mine water or its environmental effects, and so those are immediately rejected. We suspect that authors looking for an appropriate journal are fooled by our name to believe that our scope includes all environmental topics, which is not true. Recently, we considered changing the journal's name to eliminate this problem, but decided that the potential benefit was not worth the potential effects that changing the journal's name would have on our citation index. In case you are curious, Fig. 1 shows the number of papers published each year since its initial publication in 1982.

As a reminder, if you have not yet renewed your membership for 2020, this will probably be the last issue of this journal that you will receive—but it is not too late to pay your dues. IMWA membership is still the best deal around; it costs only about 70 Euros, and provides you with this journal mailed to your address, as well as on-line access to all papers ever published in these pages, dating back to 1982. Membership dues is what permits this journal to continue, so if

you like what you read, please encourage your peers to join IMWA. And in case you were curious, subscribing to this journal without joining IMWA is possible, but is actually more expensive than paying our dues to join the association.

As a final note, let me comment on something I have repeatedly heard—that because of this pandemic, things will never be the same again. The honest fact is that this statement is always true. The changes this time around might be a little more dramatic than usual, but we will find a way to recover and move on, as we always have and always will. So, here's my suggestion: be flexible and look for opportunities that will be created by all of the changes that are happening. On behalf of this journal's all-volunteer staff, please stay safe and stay well!

Best Regards,

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