Dear Reader

Bob Kleinmann¹

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Dear Reader,

It has been a while since I have written this column because our last two issues had guest editors, though I was, of course, helping them behind the scenes. But here we are now, continuing to celebrate this 40th volume of our journal. Like the last two issues, the front and back cover of this issue (and the December issue to come) are mine water-related photographs submitted by and selected by the IMWA membership. These covers have been well received by our readers, so Christian Wolkersdorfer has arranged with our publisher that all future issues of the journal will feature such photographs on our covers. They won't change four times a year like they have this year; instead, the selected photographs will be used for each issue of one year, starting in March 2022. I am writing this in July 2021, and so the solicitation for high quality photographs is still open. By the time you read this, he may already be asking for you to vote on your preferred cover options. If so, please do so.

Moving on, I am writing this in July and the first ever virtual IMWA conference just finished last week. I was

incredibly impressed with how well it went. There were of course glitches, but far fewer than I had anticipated. Congratulations to the conference organizers and all of the behind-the-scenes folks who made it happen. Personally, it was very strange to experience jet lag without having crossed a time zone—a result of having to get up at about 4 am for four mornings in a row here in Pittsburgh, but I know it was far worse for IMWA members from further west—I wonder how many folks from the western US and Canada attended? Still, there were 247 attendees, which I thought was a good turnout, considering the circumstances. And surprisingly, some of the IMWA family feeling managed to pervade the conference, despite the physical distances separating all of us. I know though that we are all looking forward to meeting together in person again, at next year's meeting in New Zealand and in 2023 in Wales (this time actually in Wales!). Meanwhile, here is where you can find the proceedings of the 2021 conference and all the prior IMWA conference proceedings: <https://www.IMWA.info/imwa-proceedings/proceedings.html>. If you didn't have time to attend the event, you can purchase all the presentation videos at a great price: £39 for students, £111 for IMWA members and £147 for everyone else.

Last year, knowing that this was going to be volume 40, we asked our older members to provide some short manuscripts that would provide some historical perspective about IMWA and the various areas of research that they have been involved in. The first three papers in this issue, all classified as IMWA Insights, are responses to that request. We look forward to publishing a few more such papers in the December issue.

Because I did not write a column for the March issue, I never got to thank the 2019 reviewers. I promise to acknowledge each of them, by name, in next March's issue, along with all of you who reviewed manuscripts for us in 2020.

But I won't wait that long to thank Kendra Zamzow and Christie Terrell, who recently stepped down as associate editors after many years of helping us out. And I want to recognize Anne Weber, who became my assistant a few years ago when the number of manuscripts grew to more than I could handle on my own. She has become my right hand—without

✉ Bob Kleinmann
editor@mwten.info; robert.kleinmann@hdrinc.com

¹ HDR, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

her, there is no way I would have been able to continue being this journal's Editor-in-chief. Her professional support and proven skills managing the author and editor workload, which has become greater every year, has been invaluable to me and to the continuation of our Journal. Please join me in thanking her for her contributions.

However, Anne is not a native English speaker, and it is my preference, if possible, to one day pass on this job to someone who is able to help our authors by polishing their English. If any of you who are native English speakers think that you might enjoy editing papers and helping our authors from around the globe polish their manuscripts, please e-mail me. We could ease you into the job, gradually giving you more and more responsibilities, until you decide that you are ready to take over as Editor-in-chief. I'm not in any rush to step down, but I'm almost 70, and so it would be good to develop a candidate or two for a succession plan.

Finally, many of us have become concerned that our Journal is becoming less and less useful to our practitioner members, with the exception of our Chinese members who are very happy with all of the mine water inrush papers we have been publishing. We realize that we need to solicit a more diverse array of mine water manuscripts for publication. So, this week, I met (virtually) with our Associate Editors and International Advisory Board members to figure out what we can do to encourage the rest of you to share your experience and expertise. But please do not wait for a personal request from one of them. Please carve out some time to write up an interesting case study or an innovative development. And for those of you who are already working too many hours and feel that you have no time to write a paper, consider a call to an appropriate local university. This suggestion came up during our virtual meeting and it appears that this collaborative approach has worked very well for many practitioners, who often gain insight into why their approach is working (or not), while the professor gains an interesting project for a graduate student and joint authorship on some publications.

I asked for topics for which those on the call would be willing to write or solicit mine water related papers and the following were suggested: field methods/investigations, block cave mining, combined open pit/underground mines, surface water management, and pit lakes. And special issue

topics (though these require guest editors as well as potential authors) that were suggested included: water quality at "critical mineral" mines (e.g., Co, Cu, Ni); water issues in different responsible mining frameworks (e.g. IRMA, ICMM); perpetual treatment (examples and solutions); Sustainable Development in Mine Water Management and; the effects that climate change is having and will have on mine water management. Of course, this is not an exhaustive list. If you are not sure if the work you are doing, or have recently completed, would be suitable for submission, feel free to send me an e-mail and I will let you know how best to proceed.

We also decided to require that authors provide a Statement of Novelty or a Statement of Significance with all new manuscripts. This is a practice that some other journals have already implemented, and it makes the jobs of the editorial staff and reviewers much easier. The intent of such a Statement is not to retell what is already in the abstract, but instead to briefly explain the technical merit of the work, why it is relevant and/or novel with respect to the existing literature (including the authors' own published work) or state-of-the art, and how this work will be useful in understanding or solving mine water related problems. This will all be explained in more detail in our instructions for authors, which you can find at: <https://www.IMWA.info/notes-for-contributors.html>. By the time you are reading this in September, we should have already implemented this policy, but please feel free to e-mail me with any questions that you might have.

Best Regards,

Bob Kleinmann, PhD; Editor-in-Chief
editor@MWEN.info

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