



Dear Reader

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Making predictions has never been one of my strengths. In general, I tend to be too optimistic. However, I think it is safe to say that it looks like 2023 is going up to be an interesting year for mining, mine water, IMWA, and this journal.

Oh, some things haven't changed and are not likely to change. Unfortunately, conflicts and wars will continue to rage around the world, with many, if not most, triggered by the normal human failings: greed, fear of others, individuals who care more about themselves than about their neighbors, perceived and actual inequities or injustice, to name just a few. These conflicts will of course affect all of us to varying degrees and will therefore alter what is mined, and where mining takes place, and how much emphasis is put on the environmental aspects of mining. Those of you who are familiar with the Panguna Mine will understand the kind of thing we are referring to.

But I believe humanity as a whole and most importantly, the developed nations, are finally recognizing and starting to come to terms with the long-term implications of global warming and the need to change the way things are done before it is too late (if it is not too late already). I remember an old political cartoon featuring a corporate executive

sitting behind a desk asking: "What has the next generation ever done for me?" That mentality has long dominated the way things are done, but I think that is finally beginning to change. Mining will probably never be carbon neutral, but I see a growing emphasis on reducing the carbon footprint of everything we do, and that includes what is mined, how it is mined, and how the mined land is used after extraction is completed. In addition to the reuse of mined land for solar farming, I anticipate that the use of mine pools for heating and cooling, which is already fairly common in some areas, will soon become normal practice and that harvesting the energy of even small amounts of flowing water (including mine water) will gradually become commonplace. The technology to do these things already exists and it is just a matter of time before we start taking advantage of it.

With respect to IMWA, we are starting to see a rebound in membership, but we clearly need to do more than just reaching out to those who have let their membership lapse. Specifically, we also need to reach a broader audience. The focus of this society has long been on mining hydrology and the mining-influenced water that drains from coal and metal mines, but it is obvious that we have largely neglected the water aspects of other mined commodities, such as lithium, phosphate, potash, rock salt, and rock quarries.

And of course, the long-term fate of this journal is intertwined with that of IMWA. Perhaps the Covid-19 pandemic, and its adverse effects on in-person conferences, reduced the perceived benefits of IMWA membership. Yet, we are now emerging from that dark time, and I hope that you will take the initiative and ask your colleagues and peers to join this society and taking advantage of the free journal subscription that comes with being a member. Our first in-person conference in several years was held this past November in New Zealand (and by the way, it was wonderful to be there with the IMWA family). Our next meeting will take place in July 2023 in Wales, and we plan to hold the 2024 meeting in late Spring or early Autumn in North America—more details will be revealed in the next issue.

If you read the two previous iterations of this column (and I like to believe that at least some people did), you already

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know that we saw a very worrying decline in manuscript submissions for the journal during 2021 and 2022, presumably associated with the pandemic and its long-term effects on conducting research. We know that many other journals saw similar declines but that is small comfort. It appears though that the worst might be behind us as we began to see an uptick in manuscript submissions late in 2022; I hope the trend will continue. Meanwhile, if you have been thinking of submitting a manuscript, please don't wait. Take advantage of our improved turnaround time (from date of submission to acceptance/rejection) that came with processing fewer manuscripts. Indeed, most of the papers published in this issue were submitted within the last 12 months.

In the December issue, I thanked most of the volunteers (editors, abstract translators, and of course authors) who made it possible to publish this journal during 2022 at such a reasonable price. However, since that column had to be completed in October, it was obviously not possible to thank our reviewers at that time. So, here are the names of the 140 individuals who—in addition to our editors—took the time to review manuscripts for us in 2022. We try to spread the work out appropriately so as not to overburden our reviewers, which is why it takes so many reviewers. On behalf of the entire editorial team and our authors, I thank all of those listed below for taking the time to provide good constructive criticism. We depend on your input to help the authors improve their manuscripts and to help us decide which submissions should be published. If you don't see your name below and would like to help, please go to our journal's web site (www.IMWA.info/em) and make sure that your areas of expertise are clearly identified, as we use those to select our reviewers. This enables us to select manuscripts for you to review that you may find very interesting. If your areas of expertise are described and you have not yet been asked, just send us an e-mail and we will make sure that you receive an opportunity to help in 2023.

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In addition to all of these reviewers, I also want to thank you, our dedicated readers. Without you, there would be no reason for this journal to exist. I, and the rest of the editorial team, are grateful for your interest and participation in this journal and IMWA.

Best Regards,



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