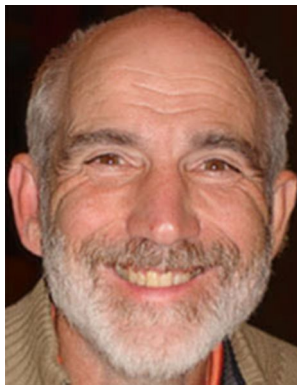




Dear Reader

Bob Kleinmann¹

Published online: 22 October 2020
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Dear Reader,

We wish you all a very happy holiday season, wherever in the world you are. 2020 has been a very strange and challenging year for all of us, and like me, I am sure you are thinking that 2021 *has* to be an improvement. I am writing this in mid-October, and in normal times, we would all now be preparing to travel to the IMWA conference in New Zealand. Well, as you know, that conference was postponed until November 2022, as the 2021 conference had already been scheduled for July in Wales. Hopefully, we will all be able to meet there then, though of course that probably depends on safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 being developed and readily available by March or April.

Regarding this issue of the journal, I truly believe that the assortment of papers means that there is at least one that will be of interest to each and every one of you, since it encompasses a wide range of disciplines and interests. And, for those readers who are looking forward to our special issue on tailings storage and were hoping that those papers would appear in this issue, at least half of those papers have already been published on-line and all of you who are

IMWA members can download them for free. The rest will probably be available on-line by the end of this calendar year. The printed versions will appear in the March 2021 issue. And for those readers looking forward to our special issue featuring papers on risk assessment, mitigation, and prevention of mine water intrushes, that will also be published in 2021, probably the July issue.

Finally, I wish to remind you that next year we will be celebrating a milestone: it will be our journal's 40th volume. Details were provided in this column in the September issue, but to briefly summarize, we are working with Springer to put a different mine water picture on each of next year's issues, and the pictures that will be used will come from those submitted by all of you. If you haven't done so already, please send good quality, high resolution (at least 2500 pixels) copyright-free images related to mine water, to IMWA's president, Christian Wolkersdorfer, at: c.wolke@IMWA.info, along with a paragraph or two describing the picture and, if pertinent, its history. As he receives them, he will post them on the IMWA website (www.MWEN.info/volume40), and we will soon ask our active IMWA members to vote on the eight best.

We are also recruiting short papers from those of you who have been active in the mine water field for at least 20 years. Please choose a mine water topic of your choice to mark how far we have come during the past 40 years and, if appropriate, where research should be focused during the next decade. Most of these papers will be classified as IMWA Insights, can be fairly informal, and do not require peer review—I will serve as both reviewer and editor. We hope you will provide some background and perspective, and explain how the technology or research field has evolved, bringing our younger readers up-to-date. I plan to prepare such a piece on passive treatment of mine water, and encourage any of you who have been active in this mine water research area for at least 20 years to join me as co-authors. For those of you who have been active in other aspects of mine water for that time span, please e-mail me your suggested topics and, if you wish, I will invite others with a similar background to join you as co-authors. Please note

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that so far, I have received only one draft submission, and I certainly hope to see some more in the next few months. We plan to print these in the 2021 December issue. For all of you who complain that today's researchers just keep reinventing the wheel, now is your chance to make the younger folks more familiar with some of the great work that has been done in the past.

We also wanted to let all of you know that a new paper category is being added to our current menu that now lists only technical articles, technical communications, and IMWA Insights. We want practioners as well as researchers to find this journal worthwhile, and while our high citation index makes it clear that the researchers are happy with this journal, it has long been clear to me, as a practioner myself, that we are not doing enough for our industry members. So, we are creating a new category, Industrial Case Studies, and hope that this will entice some of you to share stories that other practioners will find interesting. Let me make this very clear—you do not need to cite previous papers or pay any attention to our normal formatting requirements, and we welcome stories with either positive or negative outcomes. All we ask is that your paper does not come across as an advertisement for a product or a company. Please feel free to send me an email if you are unsure whether a certain topic is appropriate or not.

As this is our last issue of 2020, it is truly my pleasure to once again thank all of the volunteers who make this journal possible. I cannot think of any other professional journal that functions as well as ours with an all-volunteer staff. And that was true more than ever this year, when all of us had to balance our workload and our volunteer duties with the extra issues associated with stay-at-home restrictions, such as on-line schooling for those with children, travel restrictions, and teaching university courses remotely.

First and foremost, I want to recognize Anne Weber, who has served as my assistant for three years now and who has taken on more and more responsibility for this journal's day-to-day operations and has made our continued growth possible. I also thank all of the associate editors who graciously helped out for part or all of 2020: Moustafa Benzaazoua, Melanie Blanchette, Rob Bowell, Detlef Bringemeyer, Carlos Ruiz Cánovas, Donglin Dong, Shuning Dong, Grant Douglas, Rodrigo Jr. Embile, Rafael Fernandez-Rubio, Braden Hanna, Gyöző Jordán, Candace L. Kairies-Beatty, Jeff Langmann, Peiyue Li, Wenping Li, Mark Lund, Ann Maest, Steven Meyerhoff, Len Murray, Bob Nairn, Benoît Plante, James Pope, Dyllon Randall, Pierre Rousseau, Abhay Kumar Singh, Gideon Steyl, Christie Terrell, Purushotham Tukkaraja, Viswanath Vadapalli, Teresa Maria Valente, Rob van Hille, John Waterhouse, Qiang Wu, Kendra Zamzow,

and Wanfang Zhou – our success this past year would not have been possible without them.

Thanks also to our volunteer translators: Edgardo Donati, Jörn Geletneky, Helmuth Landsmann, Joscha Opitz, Michael Paul, Walter Pohl, Martin Schultze, Wilfried Uhlman, Kai-Uwe Ulrich, and Changshen Wang, who translate the abstracts into Spanish, German and Chinese. I also want to thank Josepha Zielke, who oversees and coordinates abstract translation. The translated abstracts appear with the on-line versions of the papers. The translators were asked to make a quick pivot just a short time ago, when it became clear that the tailings storage special issue would not be ready in time to appear in this issue. I asked these volunteers to quickly translate some other abstracts so those papers could be included in this issue. Thanks to their efforts, this issue contains at least three more papers than it would have otherwise.

I also thank the Springer Nature staff, especially Saranya Sekar, who became our primary point of contact two years ago, and Srikanth Reddy and his staff, who have overseen all the electronic and hardcopy printing of our papers; as our workload has increased, so has theirs. We are also grateful to Fritz Schmuhl, our Publishing Editor, and his assistant, Catalina Sava. Fritz is the person who authorized the expansion of our journal's content and some of our other improvements. Finally, I thank Christian Wolkersdorfer, who in addition to serving as IMWA's President, serves as this journal's Managing Editor—which means that he worries about the non-textual aspects of the journal, such as how figures should be formatted, and generally oversees our interactions with our publisher, Springer Nature.

On behalf of the entire Editorial Staff, I wish all of them, and all of you, a fantastic 2021! Please do what you can to promote IMWA membership (with its accompanying subscription to this journal) to your peers and, through corporate memberships, to the companies and universities you are associated with. This journal depends on the continued health of IMWA, our sponsoring organization.

Best Regards,



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