

EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

I had a major computer hard drive crash in mid November, and subsequently spent several days loading back on tons of software once it was fixed. Of course, naturally, I hadn't backed up for several weeks (I know, I know....). Hence, I lost the ACKMA Journal, and the Naracoorte Proceedings (which I'd all but finished editing). However, after many late nights, hopefully, both the December Journal and Proceedings will be in members' hands prior to Christmas.

First up, following the suggestions of a number of committee members, **the 2000 ACKMA Inc. AGM** at Buchan Caves, Victoria, has been moved on one week – to avoid the Queen's Birthday weekend which may well be busy at several cave locations. The AGM will be now held on the weekend of 17 – 18 June. Details, and a Booking Form, are herein, and members are requested to get the form in, in good time. Some transport will be available, ex Melbourne, for those flying in from New Zealand or interstate.

As many will know, John Trenneman has sold **Cammoo Caves**, near Rockhampton, to the Queensland National Parks & Wildlife Service (QNPWS). I am sure all ACKMA members will join me in wishing John a happy retirement. A formal *hand over* function was held in late November (see Dianne Vavryn's article herein). Happily, harmony and good will has now been restored, given the great discord of the past over the Mt. Etna caves, and the future for the karst in this area looks positive and assured. It is not clear yet what QNPWS plan for the future of Cammoo Caves, although I understand they are unlikely to remain as full tourist operations.

Our Karst Science Officer, Andy Spate, left for Antarctica in late November, and will return in March next year. This, as I recall, is his third trip to the "great white hell" (as he calls it), and I am sure he'll have a great time (albeit a cold one!). I have his contact details if any members need them.

Congratulations to ACKMA Fellow, Rauleigh Webb, on his recent marriage to Samantha Shirley!! Hats galore, or course, as Andy Spate's brief article elsewhere herein attests!! Also congratulations to Elery Hamilton-Smith who recently celebrated his 70th birthday!! I understand that while in Western Australia, primarily for Rauleigh's wedding, Elery

was "subjected" to a surprise birthday party at *Caveworks*, Margaret River. Good stuff!!

I again draw member's attention to the **Karst Studies Seminar** coming up next February at Wellington Caves. Full details were in the last Journal, of course, so I will not repeat them here. Suffice it to say the event, and the closing date for bookings, is fast approaching. So, Get your registration in pronto. It is an event not to be missed!!! I expect to be attending myself, but try to come anyway!!

Also happening early next year is the biennial **Cave Guides Gathering**, or *Gabfest* – this time at Wombeyan Caves. This event is a great training seminar for cave guides, and all managers are encouraged to have as many of their staff present as possible. Again, details are herein.

As Brian Clark has noted in his President's Report, Arthur Clark and Neville Michie have been in the U. S. A. representing ACKMA at the **NSS Cave Management Symposium** in Chattanooga – where they caught up with Cheryl Jones and many of our American ACKMA members who attended our Mt. Gambier Conference last April. Arthur spent also few days with Tom and Cathy Aley, and went up to Canada to "karst-about" with Paul Griffiths. I have had many emails from Arthur with notes on his travels that would have formed an article in this edition. However, I lost them all in my computer crash, so we will have to await Arthur's return, and the March Edition, for his words of karst wisdom.

Things continue to buzz in New Zealand. The new visitor's centre at **Waitomo's Glowworm Cave** is due to be opened before the year is out. And the proposals for Ruakuri Cave are progressing. A feature on the former will appear in the March Journal.

And finally, our Executive Officer, Professor Dave Gillieson, has advised that he will stand down from the position at the AGM next June. This comes as no surprise given the very heavy professional duties he now has at James Cook University. He also wants more time to work on his suntan, I'm sure!! Dave has been a fantastic executive officer, and will be a most hard act to follow. Fear not, he will still remain an active in ACKMA, just not on the Executive. Any member who may be interested in succeeding to the Executive Officer position is warmly encouraged to put his/her name forward. Those interested can usefully contact Dave to discover what is involved.