

EDITORIAL

Sixty-Five and Still Going Strong

Journal of Cave and Karst Studies

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It is with great pleasure and satisfaction for me that with this Special Issue of the *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* we mark the 65th Anniversary of the National Speleological Society (NSS) which occurred in 2006. The last such special issue marked the 25th Anniversary of the NSS.

This particular special issue is especially gratifying because it also represents a major change in the way the *Journal* is now put together. Authors, associate editors (AEs), reviewers, and numerous others will find what I believe are major improvements to the *Journal* publishing process.

ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

First, I want to point out that for this Anniversary Issue several individuals consented to writing special articles marking the progress in cave and karst studies since the inception of the NSS. Back in 1966, which marked the 25th Anniversary of the NSS, a special issue of the old *Bulletin of the National Speleological Society* (vol. 28, no. 1) included manuscripts on earth sciences and speleology, evolution of cave biology in the United States, cave exploration techniques, and an early history of the NSS. Manuscripts accepted for this special Anniversary issue follow the original concept applied in the 25th Anniversary issue by addressing the major areas of cave and karst studies covered by the *Journal* and some currently less prominent areas, all by some of the most recognized researchers in caves and karst.

For example, earth science and biology papers make up the bulk of papers submitted for publication in the *Journal*. Earth science papers in this issue include manuscripts on the historical aspects of speleogenesis and cave geology (A. Palmer), island cave and karst formation (J. Mylroie and J. Mylroie), cave mineralogy and the NSS (C. Hill and P. Forti), hydrology (W. White), cave sediments and paleoclimates (W. White), groundwater tracing (S. Worthington), and pseudokarst (W. Halliday). Life sciences papers include manuscripts on zoogeography and biodiversity in Missouri caves (W. Elliott), and biology and ecology of cave crickets (K. Lavoie, K. Helf, and T. Poulson). Microbiological papers include manuscripts on molecular techniques used in subterranean biogeography (M. Porter), historical perspectives and future research on geomicrobiology in cave environments (H. Barton), biodiversity of

sulfidic karst habitats (A. Engel); the latter two crossing the earth science and biological divisions of cave karst studies.

Other significant areas of coverage in the *Journal* in the past, but now more rarely submitted for publication are archaeology, exploration, and social sciences. Cave archaeology and the NSS (G. Crothers, P. Willey, and P. Watson) documents directions the field has taken over the years. The importance of cave exploration and scientific research, a subject area that may be regarded as the legacy of the NSS but that has been sorely lacking over the past several years, is covered in this issue (P. Kambesis). Even more rarely, a social science paper on the creation of a karst database (L. Florea and B. Fratesi) has been included. Lastly, a paper on the human health aspects of exploring and working in caves with elevated levels of radon has been included (M. Field).

PUBLISHING CHANGES WITH THIS ISSUE

As of May 2007 the *Journal* is now accepting all manuscripts via AllenTrack, a web-based system for on-line submission. The AllenTrack web site, <http://jcks.allentrack2.net>, will be accessible directly from the NSS *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* web site, <http://www.caves.org/pub/journal/>. AllenTrack is the same organization that handles publishing of such respected journals as *American Mineralogist*, *Geology*, *Geological Society of America Bulletin*, *Ground Water*, *Journal of Paleontology*, and *Journal of Sedimentary Research* so it is likely that many authors will already be familiar with the on-line submission process. This change in our publishing process represents a major accomplishment and should greatly enhance the *Journal* while reducing overall publishing costs.

The AllenTrack system is fully integrated so that the editorial staff can fully monitor the review process and more effectively keep the process moving forward. Manuscripts will no longer need to be mailed in triplicate; nor will authors be responsible for determining which AE should receive a particular manuscript. By including selected keywords on the web site when submitting a manuscript, the appropriate AE will automatically be determined, but which may be overridden, as appropriate, by me. All AEs and reviewers will have access to the system whenever and wherever they are as long as they have access to the internet, so reviews and decisions can be made while traveling. Overall, everyone should find the process remarkably easy.

MANUSCRIPT AUTHORS

Manuscript submission is quite easy. After accessing the site for the first time, authors create a login and password and then will enter necessary preliminary manuscript information (authors, addresses, manuscript title, etc.). Then an author will upload their manuscript, figure files, and table files preferably in the original format in which they were created (e.g., DOC, WPD, RTF, TXT, or LaTeX for manuscripts and tables; Excel for tables; and TIFF, EPS, or PDF for figures). Alternatively, manuscripts can be submitted as PDF or HTML files for review purposes only; if accepted the manuscript will need to be resubmitted in one of the listed accepted formats. Tables and figures may be appended to the main document when submitted or tables and figures may be uploaded separately from the main document.

Once uploaded, the system will convert all uploaded files to a single PDF in approximately 10 minutes and a confirmation will be sent to authors via e-mail. Manuscripts already in the system will be uploaded by the editor, but effective June 2007 it is expected that all authors will submit manuscripts using the new internet-based system.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS AND REVIEWERS

Associate editors and reviewers will be able to access submitted manuscripts on-line and will be able to conduct reviews on-line as well. Alternatively, if a hardcopy of the submitted manuscript is desired, then a copy may be downloaded and printed as well. Reviewer's summary opinions, comments, and recommendations for editors, as well as any detailed comments for authors, will all be submitted via the AllenTrack system. Annotated comments on hardcopies can still be returned to AEs if desired, but are no longer necessary.

Associate Editor recommendations and the Editor's decision regarding each manuscript will be sent out to the corresponding author via e-mail. Author-required revisions will also use the AllenTrack web site as will final edits.

Because this is such a significant change in the way manuscripts will be handled in the *Journal*, it will likely require some patience by everyone concerned as we work through the new procedures. However, it is expected that this new *Journal* process will result in monetary savings and speed up the publication process. Overall, it should be a benefit to all concerned.