

EDITORIAL

Production Changes for Future Publication of the *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies*

SCOTT ENGEL

Production Editor

The *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* has experienced budget shortfalls for the last several years for a multitude of reasons that include, but are not limited to, increased cost of paper, increased costs of shipping through the United State Postal Service, increased submissions, and stagnant funding from the National Speleological Society (NSS). The cost to produce the *Journal* has increased 5 to 20 percent per year for the last five years, yet the budget for the *Journal* has remained unchanged. To offset rising costs, the *Journal* has implemented numerous changes over recent years to streamline the production and printing process. However, the increasing production costs, combined with the increasing rate of good-quality submissions, has resulted in the number of accepted manuscripts by the *Journal* growing faster than the acquisition of funding to print those manuscripts. As a result, the *Journal* is experiencing an unprecedented backlog of manuscripts to be published, resulting in long delays (up to one year) between acceptance of a manuscript and its printing. In order to clear our backlog and stay within budget, changes have to be made. *Journal* staff and the NSS Board of Governors have been evaluating numerous options for more than a year to find the best approach to maintain the *Journal* as the premier peer-reviewed journal for karst studies while keeping it within the budget constraints of the modern economy.

At the recommendation of the *Journal* Editor, the NSS Board of Governors voted in July 2011 to begin moving to an electronic publishing process to reduce production and printing costs (Act 81-854). Accordingly, beginning with the

December 2011 issue, printed copies of the *Journal* will be automatically distributed to paid subscribers, institutions, and only those NSS members with active Life and Sustaining level memberships. The remainder of the NSS membership will be able to view the *Journal* electronically online but will not automatically receive a printed copy. Full content of each issue of the *Journal* will be available for viewing and downloading in PDF format at no cost from the *Journal* website www.caves.org/pub/journal.

Anyone wishing to receive a printed copy of the *Journal* will be able to subscribe for an additional cost separate from normal NSS dues. The cost and subscription process were still being determined at the time of this printing. Once determined, the subscription information will be posted on the *Journal* website. We anticipate that in the future, subscription fees will be included as an optional payment along with annual NSS dues renewal or can be made separately online or through the NSS office. We hope to reduce the financial burden on individuals by continuing to allow free access online to all.

While this is not an ideal solution for many current recipients of the *Journal*, it is consistent with the operation and distribution of many scientific journals around the world. The *Journal* has grown to become the most recognized karst science publication in the world and is the cornerstone of science education outreach in the NSS. We believe that the change to electronic publication will serve to preserve the *Journal* in a sustainable manner and will allow it to continue as a key resource for the Society's mission to advance the study and science of speleology.