

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

– Steve Bourne

Steve Bourne with 'Gertrude' – tortoise number 41 that he now sponsors on Rodrigues.



After being roundly scolded by Kent for not submitting a report until well past the eleventh hour for the last journal, I thought it best not to make him sweat this time. It also helps being in Australia, after being on a most enjoyable trip to the Mascarene Islands in the Indian Ocean when the last journal articles were due. A report on that trip is presented in this journal, so all I will say here is there are a whole lot of great cave experiences in some of these remote locations.

Deborah Carden has started as the manager of Naracoorte and Tantanoola Caves. It has been great to welcome someone with Deborah's experience into our region and I plan to keep her very busy. Despite the economic doom and gloom prior to Christmas, our region has a highly successful summer holiday period, in fact the best for six years. I imagine regions relying on international visitors may have suffered, but drive regions like the southeast of South Australia have certainly benefited.

CKMA has been asked to contribute to two different management plans, one in the Greater Alpine National Park in Victoria and the Snowy Mountains NP in New South Wales. I am happy to review the documents but greatly welcome input from members with far greater knowledge of these parks than I have. I see it as critical for ACKMA to respond to these invitations as it increases the profile of the organisation. The new Caring for our Country funding program presents some challenges for managers of geological sites seeking support, but pleasingly (from my perspective) the business plan presents a greater landscape approach to conservation efforts. It remains to be tested how caves and karst can fare with this approach.

Not long after the last journal was distributed, I received contact from Tom Aley, from the Ozark Underground Laboratory, whose interest was piqued by my comment on the tree root issue in Victoria Fossil cave that is impacting a very significant fossil deposit. That contact once again demonstrated the value of the ACKMA network where knowledge that may not be in the literature or difficult to locate can be shared amongst members. Tom has kindly written a response which I greatly appreciate.

The Margaret River ACKMA conference approaches quickly. It is a very special part of the world so if you are hesitating, don't, this will be a sensational week. And look at it as a wise way to 'spend Kevin', the \$900 bonus will cover the whole conference!! If you don't qualify for the bonus, you have enough money anyway. Not sure how to sell it to our New Zealand friends, except the region is a biodiversity hotspot, has great caves, visitor infrastructure and beaches-with wine second only to Coonawarra.....See you there for the taste test!!

COMING EVENTS

– Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith

This list will simply list events of special interest to cave managers, cavers and others seriously interested in caves and karst. If you are interested in any listed events, contact me for further details at <elery@alphalink.com.au>.

2009: April 27-29	Workshop on East Asian Geoparks, Taiwan
2009: May 3-9	18th ACKMA Conference, Margaret River, Western Australia
2009: May 12-17	Hypogene Speleogenesis and Karst Hydrology of Artesian Basins, Chernivtsy, Ukraine
2009: June 3-5	Native Title Conference, Melbourne
2009: July 5-8	International Conference on Society and Resource Management, Vienna, Austria
2009: July 6-11	International Conference on Geomorphology, Melbourne
2009: July 19-26	International Congress of Speleology, Kerrville, Texas
2009: Sept 23-26	Sustainability of the Karst Environment, Plitvice, Croatia
And Looking Ahead:	
2010: April 12-16	UNESCO Conference on Geoparks, Langkawi, Malaysia
2010: April 16-19	2nd Global Geotourism Conference, Kuching, Sarawak
2010: May	ACKMA Annual General Meeting 'Week', Mulu Caves, Sarawak, Malaysia
2010: 25-28 July	13th Cave Guides Gathering, Wellington, New South Wales.
2010: August (dates TBA)	14th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology, Undara, Queensland.

