

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Peter Chandler

On behalf of Libby and myself, I would like to take this opportunity to wish ACKMA members and their families best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

I would like to express my condolences to family friends and ISCA members on the death of Giannis (John) Zalavras, Manager of Perama Cave, Ioannina, Greece, who was gunned down in his office 26 November 2012. Some members may wish to contribute to the memorial fund that David Summers is coordinating; this could be done at the Waitomo conference.

Talking of the Waitomo Conference, at some past conferences some funding has been available to sponsor student of others via the life members fund. An email to the ACKMA list will circulate soon with criteria for this and a cut off date likely to be 31 January, to allow the successful applicant(s) to organise their presentation and travel plans.

As usual the summer Christmas/New Year break in this hemisphere is characterised by big visitor numbers for cave managers and staff, while the majority of the populous are on holiday. I hear reports that big numbers through the Waitomo Glowworm Cave, in combination with some certain weather patterns, has caused some short term peaks in CO₂ levels requiring some limits on visitors. Historically this cave has experienced huge crowds over holiday weekends.

It is always a question to me whether the co-owner/manager of a cave tour should spend time at the coal face guiding tours, when many do not. Guiding tours can be time consuming, tiring and challenging, but as long as some time is allowed for the other duties, some guiding has rewards in meeting nice people and keeping in touch with the very essence of the way the cave is managed by the ticket proceeds rather than outside funding.

There is always time though to join some fellow Hamilton Tomo Group cavers for some classic summer cave trips walking up the Mangawhitikau stream from Spellbound/Masons to the Koropupu Cave and Scenic Reserve and a through trip of Waipuna cave. Parts of this will be available as pre-conference caving in May.

Celina Yapp at the Waitomo Museum Society recently hosted a group of around 50 people for a family reunion of the late Henry Lambert, who founded the New Zealand Speleological Society in 1949. John Pybus, member number two, and his wife Jessica were also in attendance.

Due to unfavourable tide times and an increase in patronage, the Waitomo post conference tour is likely to cruise the Whaingaroa (Raglan) Harbour with its coastal Karst as opposed to the less accessible Kawhia Harbour.



Rainbow over the valley where Spellbound Tours operates. Photo: Spellbound Tours.