



President's Report – AGM 2017

It has been my great pleasure to serve HAC for my ninth year. I wish I could tell you it was getting easier, but every time I close one file, your Board opens two others for me.

Industry and Association Circumstances

As the industry goes - so goes its Association. An old boss of mine once said “An Association is what its members want it to be.” As you may know, HAC operates with two full-time staff – myself, and Barb Priestley, who has been with us since 2008, when I started. She’s not getting older - she’s getting better at what she does. We also operate with a stable of roughly seven excellent contractors that provide us with Social Media services, CFO services, Book Keeping services, Convention Planners; Newsletter and Website services; and for contracted project work. It’s taken us awhile to find the right contractors – but these people are consistently excellent.

The last nine years have been challenging ones for our industry. Challenging Domestic and global economic circumstances; the boom-and-bust nature of firefighting work, under circumstances where the Provincial Firefighting Agencies are choosing to fight fewer and fewer fires; the defacto requirement for an SMS, even in the absence of any regulations, or the attendant regulatory flexibility that was *supposed* to accompany it; the astonishing proliferation of UAVs – commercially operated, and particularly the hazards presented by recreational UAVs; an incredible shrinking regulator, who has become less and less engaged with operators in the field, except of course in the process of conducting a PVI, or an Audit; and the incredible “race to the bottom” we have seen with respect to rates, in the last ten years.

Commercial helicopter operators have always been resilient and adaptable. We are seeing more and more operators looking outside Canada for opportunities, and our Canadian reputation for utility operations is well respected internationally; our members continue to explore new areas of specialization, including HETS, and geo-referenced photography, and wind turbine maintenance and repair – and yes, even joining forces with UAV operators, to name only a few.

I am pleased to report however, that your Association is still on very solid financial ground, although, like you we continue to experience our challenges. Like you, we have had to keep our rates, low. It has been seven years since we

last raised Membership fees. You will notice that your fees for this year did not rise, again. You have heard about our some of our financial circumstances in the last Fiscal Year from our Treasurer, Brian Clegg, as part of his Treasurer's Report. Our Members and Associates remain very loyal, even as we have seen a number of Operator consolidations, and even some business casualties. We currently have 115 Operator-members – up slightly from last year at 109, and 141 Associates - down slightly from last year at 148. This year we welcomed two new Corporate Sponsors, namely *JLT Canada*, and *Essential Turbines*, bringing our list of valued Corporate Sponsors to twelve;

Recent Association Priorities

In the last year, much of our effort has been focused on influencing the course of the Fatigue Management regulations. It has been almost 9 years since the most recent process of overhauling our Canadian regulations began, and while it may appear as if it is almost complete, it is “never over til its over” as-they-say, and your association will continue to oppose these misguided new regulations in the run-up to Canada Gazette II – notionally in the Spring of 2018 – and beyond that, when they are supposed to come in to force for us, four years later.

In the last year, we have been involved in changes to the H1 Heliport operational requirements; consultation on the changes to the requirement for Terrain Awareness Warning Systems (TAWS) on helicopters operating at night or IFR; overhauled our Committees site and our website; we have been working to restore some of the dialogue that used to take place between our Committees and Transport Canada here, and we have expanded our Safety focus to explore a new Convention model; we have contracted for the next two conventions in Vancouver and at the same time moved away from the Remembrance Day weekend – you spoke and we listened; we have been participating in a Risk Assessment to examine the potential for de-regulating CAR 702 operations; we have consulted on regulatory changes at the CTA, and on prospective changes to the Canadian Ownership requirements; we have testified before the Standing Committee on Transport; we are forging a new HAC Affinity Agreement with JLT Insurance, that will prospectively include a Pension Plan component for contracted and full-time employees; I continue to serve on the Board of the Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace, on the NAV CANADA Advisory Committee, and on the Executive Committee of the IHST as we promote their goal of a “Zero Accident Rate”; we continue to produce a bi-weekly Newsletter to generate valuable non-dues revenue and let our members know “What we have done for you lately”.

Finally, thank-you to all of our Operator-members, Associates, and Corporate Sponsors and Convention Sponsors for your loyalty.