

2012 CAHS Annual General Meeting Membership Secretary's Report

In the coming years, the Society faces a growing challenge to maintain both chapter and national membership levels. We must also adapt to the different interests of younger members who have grown up in a different period of aviation and with the Internet, Facebook and other social media applications as their preferred means of consuming information. In the last few years, the Society has begun to move in this direction with a new web site, an electronic newsletter, digital editions of the Journal and Twitter which is used to get out fast breaking news to members and the public using that technology.

The efforts of the Membership Secretary over the last year have been focused on a number of executive-initiated projects and action items while day-to-day membership issues have largely been handled by our dedicated Treasurer. Having the Treasurer handle this time-consuming activity has been administratively more efficient and secure as access to the membership database and membership subscription information is needed and the CAHS does not currently have the means to allow remote database access which would permit someone else to remotely access the required information. However it does place an extra burden on the already demanding role of Treasurer.

Our Treasurer has provided the following information on membership levels and current status.

The following are Membership Secretary highlights over this last year. As Privacy Officer for the CAHS, I took on a project to develop a formal Privacy Policy for the CAHS regarding the acquisition, maintenance and more importantly the protection of personal information. This required an in depth understanding of Federal Government regulations and guidelines with respect to National not-for-profit organizations such as the CAHS. As you may be aware, the CAHS has now adopted a privacy policy which mirrors the recommendations of the Federal Government's Privacy Office for the protection of personal information even though the CAHS as a not-for-profit organization is not required to do so. This policy should insure that CAHS members are comfortable in providing the information that we require to conduct Society business with members.

With regard to National membership levels and those of the local Chapters, they have been slowly declining as we lose members from the "Greatest Generation" and this has affected some Chapters to the point that we have closed the Kingston Chapter while at least one other has been challenged to maintain enough members to continue operations.

In my first year as Membership Secretary in 2011, I spent a considerable effort in looking for groups within our country who might have a natural affinity as potential members of CAHS and who we could easily target as potential new members. This included contacting and presenting CAHS benefits to flying clubs, the Canadian Owners & Pilots Association executive, Air Cadets, the Royal Canadian Legion, retired airline employee organizations and others with a direct

connection to aviation. My experience in trying to recruit new members from this cadre of sources was somewhat disappointing with minimal success in recruiting new members. However, all of these organizations were interested and willing to promote CAHS membership within their ranks. This has generally involved publishing notices or articles in their internal newsletters. While these were great opportunities to promote the CAHS, it has not been possible to track the results of these efforts in generating new members and I suspect that they have been minimal. This has led to the conclusion that the best source of new members for both Chapters and the National is through the personal relationships of existing members with potential members and between CAHS Chapters and their local communities. Chapters are best positioned to directly influence recruitment of new members through the efforts of each chapter member in recruiting from their circle of friends or acquaintances. There are many community events and resources that local Chapters are best positioned to utilize for the promotion of both CAHS National and Chapter membership benefits. For example, community newspapers usually provide free advertising for not-for-profit organizations to promote Chapter events and meetings. The National Executive will continue to promote CAHS membership through national organizations such as the Royal Canadian Legion and COPA for the benefit of both the local Chapters and the National organization and also assist Chapters with membership recruitment.

Another key activity this year for the Membership Secretary was administration of the MacRitchie AME Award and CAHS participation in the presentation of this award at the annual Centennial College awards ceremony in Toronto. Activities such as this take a great deal of coordination between the award sponsor, the college, local CAHS Chapter and National Executive participants.

It has been a privilege and an honour to be a member of the National Executive over the last two years, to make my own contribution to CAHS and most importantly, to serve the membership. It has also been a great privilege and opportunity to make so many new friendships across this amazing country and for this I thank you.

Sincerely,

Don MacNeil