

COUNTER-TORQUE issue 52 September 2020

This is an unusual time of the year to issue a Counter-torque, but it is fair to say these are unusual times. The main intent of this issue is to let you know the Central Canada Branch Committee continue to be active on your behalf. It goes without saying we have had no events this year and are unlikely to have any within the foreseeable future.

As many of you will recall, we had organised our Annual Meeting Dinner/Lecture for March 20th at our usual venue, The Stage Door room of the North York Novotel. We had a speaker organised, Dr Gary Elfstrom was going to give a talk on "Wind Tunnels: the need and their development".

By early March it was clear Covid19 was here, so perhaps understandably, registrations for the event were few. Following discussions with the hotel we cancelled the Annual Meeting event and notified CCB members of this decision on March 12th. The Novotel did not charge us any cancellation fees and offered to return the small deposit we had paid to confirm our original booking. Alternatively, they would retain the deposit for confirmation of future bookings. We chose this option, tentatively booking the Festive Event for either December 4th or December 11th. In all probability the situation will most likely still not be suitable for this event to take place. We will continue to monitor the situation and, if necessary, cancel our tentative dates. We recognise our CCB membership is an aging one, so many will be considered at high risk. Others have additional health problems that

compound the risk. Dr Elfstrom has offered to give his presentation at a future date.

The cancellation of the Annual Meeting and discussions with the hotel were all dealt with by e-mails and individual telephone calls between committee members.

This following information does not directly affect the CCB membership as a whole, but it should help communication, so may be of interest.

In mid-May we were advised by Birdcage Walk that a project is underway to roll out Microsoft Teams, a digital platform for communication and collaboration, to all member committees. This had always been part of the wider plan to upgrade digital services to members, but the lockdown resulted in this element of the project being expedited, for obvious reasons. The Events and Member Engagement team are working hard to deliver the full roll out program. Teams will require users to be set up with an Office 365 account, which necessitates a signed data protection agreement and completed GDPR training, making this a fairly substantial project in its own right. If committee members haven't done so already, a member of the Events and Member Engagement team will shortly be in contact with you, your committee chair and/or secretary to arrange for set-up. This has already been done for the CCB; although some CCB committee members have still to complete the GDPR training.

HQ continued to say some committees are already set up and

running with virtual meeting capability. Wherever possible HQ encouraged these committees to continue to meet virtually. For any committees who do not already have this facility, until MS Teams is fully rolled out, HQ suggested using the Cisco WebEx platform, which some may already be familiar with. Should a committee wish to host a WebEx meeting they should get in touch with their usual contact at HQ. To help HQ prepare the WebEx meeting slot it will be necessary to provide the following information: Committee Name, Title of the meeting, Date, Timings & approximate number of attendees. HQ staff will then be able to schedule a WebEx meeting. A member of HQ staff from the Events & Engagement Department will be on hand to set up the WebEx session, issue login detail and be available to address any queries on the day.

The CCB committee continues to look at our options for any on-line presentations.

On June 4th the CCB Committee met by teleconferencing. This was our first formal meeting since our face to face meeting at December's Festive Event at the Novotel. However, as previously mentioned there have been many individual e-mail and telephone calls in connection with the Annual Meeting cancellation and also the Microsoft Teams project. During our teleconference meeting, former Branch Chair Tony Hamilton listed some potential speakers for on-line lectures: -

Moltex Energy, St John New Brunswick, small, modular stable-salt reactor manufacture (The CEO is an IMechE member and an Irishman like Tony).

Rave, based in Kitchener (rave.io), music-sorting algorithms.

Pangea Subsea, based in St John's NL, seabed mapping and location of unexploded ordnance.

Mr Hamilton has spoken with Lucy Esmond at HQ who has access to on-line platforms. She can pre-approve presentations and do world-wide promotion of meetings.

I have already reported, as long-time sponsors of Formula North, the Central Canada Branch was advised that the Formula North competition was being transitioned under SAE International's Formula SAE program. Formula North Inc., the organisation that has run Formula North since its start in 2010, ceased to exist. In future the program will launch under new branding as "Formula SAE® North", and will host both Internal Combustion (IC) and Electric Vehicle (EV) classes. It was inevitable the 2020 Formula North event had to be cancelled. It was organised by the new SAE organisation and was planned to take place at the Jukasa Motor Speedway, near Hagersville Ontario. Obviously, the event would have involved non-discretionary border crossing by USA students, as well as many other Covid-19 related issues.

The CCB Committee met again on August 11th, by teleconferencing. We continue to discuss various options for holding virtual meetings for the CCB membership. Committee member, and a past Chair, Ravi Vijn, provided further details of potential speaker Christopher Borroni-Bird, who had

spoken some years back when he was with General Motors and later with Qualcomm dealing with AI-related subjects. He is now an independent consultant and part-time professor at MIT. His company's website is at Afree.org showing solar-powered vehicles for the third world. Mr. Vijn also passed these details to Ivo Brook in London. We are not able to provide a likely date for this presentation at this time. It is inevitable this Counter-Torque will be short but I would welcome any feedback and thoughts as to going ahead with some form of on-line virtual meeting; preferred platforms and topics. Plant tours are obviously unavailable these days! In closing I must thank the Branch officers, particularly our Hon. Secretary, Phil Apperly and our Hon. Treasurer Peter Dennis who have served the Branch with dedication and perseverance during these difficult times. Other CCB committee members have contributed in many ways over this period.

I hope you are all staying safe and keeping well.

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