

President's Report (April 2001)

It has been a long winter and I for one am glad that it is now over. It looks like the threat of a flood for the Red River Valley is a less of a threat than earlier predicted; but there will be flooding adjacent the Red River. However, those of you in the Southwest part of our great province may be in for a slightly different story; the Souris and Assiniboine Rivers may have a lot more water to dispose of given the number of snowstorms and the large amount of snow in the area. So, those of you in the Brandon zone may be called upon to provide an assist to those municipalities in the area.

With spring upon us and for those members whose planes we depend upon, I urge you to ensure that both you and your airplane are ready for the summer flying season; especially if you have had your aircraft parked all winter. Flying in the summer brings with it a different set of conditions when compared to winter flying; both are extremely pleasurable if you acknowledge the environment.

All of our zones have been very active this winter. Training has been continuous although frustrating at times due to the numerous cancellations caused by the weather. We were fortunate to have been given additional funds from National and this allowed us to add additional training to our schedule. Your Board of Directors also underwent some additional training to allow us to operate more efficiently and effectively; they were some very needed and worthwhile classes.

Our AGM has been scheduled for June 2nd and is being ably hosted for the first time in our history by Zone 4 Thompson. I want to thank them for coming forward to volunteer to undertake this important duty. Please see elsewhere in this issue of the Searcher for additional information about the agenda and the activities planned by Zone 4.

I have been very busy on the National front and, while this is necessary for the good of CASARA as a whole, it does preclude my attendance at some of our own activities. For this, I apologize, and I hope that you understand. As I write this, I am returning from attending the retirement of Mr Bill Slaughter, the Director General for the National Search and Rescue Secretariat which is the prime capital funding and co-ordinating agency for new SAR Initiatives in Canada. This event was attended by the Lead Minister for SAR, who is also the Minister of National Defence, Mr Art Eggleton and the majority of the SAR organizations in Canada and was an excellent venue for networking and ensuring that the CASARA name was kept in the fore. I presented a plaque on behalf of all of our volunteers for the encouragement and support that Bill has given to the SAR community over his time at NSS. I have known Bill for over 25 years and have a great respect for his experience and his abilities and I wish him well in his retirement after 42 years of federal service both in the military and civilian worlds.

As mentioned in my previous report, National has undertaken "Engagement Reviews" of all 13 Member Organizations. These reviews are similar to an audit but they are performed by our own volunteers, in this case mainly by the Vice President of Finance and Administration, Mr Dwight Ough from New Brunswick. He is assisted as required by

other members of the National Executive and to that end, I have assisted on a number and I can understand why I am not an accountant. Reviewing all claims for a 2-year period becomes a daunting task; for instance, in the case of Quebec, we reviewed almost 2000 claims and thankfully because of the excellent work of their Treasurer, there were a very limited number of problems and those were mostly administrative and not financial.

In the near future, I have been invited to attend the AGM's in Ontario and Nunavut. It is at these meetings that the membership gets a chance to ask those questions that they have of National and an opportunity to get their complaints heard. It is also an opportunity for me as National President to explain new policies and directions that National has undertaken.

Once again we have revised the CASARA program and I believe that you will find this version to be what we have been waiting for. CASARA 2001 will be issued in early April (as I write this the new disks have been mailed to each director) and will incorporate all of the suggestions that have been made by the field over the last 2 years. It comes in 3 Editions; 1 for the zones; 1 for the Province/Territory, and 1 for the National Office. Each will roll up to the next level, thus giving a total for each level. This will allow easier reporting and more accurate data as the data will only be entered once and that is at the source. I hope that you will find this program more user friendly for that was the intention of the programmer; there is also a 31 page electronic manual included with the CASARA 2001 Program.

Once again, I want to thank all of our volunteers for giving of your time and efforts to make CASARA Manitoba the excellent organization that it is; we stand very well in the ranks of all the Member Organizations that make up CASARA. I would be remiss if I didn't express our thanks to all of our spouses/significant others who allow us the opportunity to contribute to such a worth while organization. Remember we are here so

"that others may live"