

LETTER TO THE EDITOR AND PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

As I have not been attending CAA meetings the last couple of years, I appreciate that Canadian Acoustics publishes the minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors and the Annual General Meetings. From the October 1998 meetings, I note that the CAA has managed to turn around what was advertised as a precarious financial situation two-and-a-half years ago in Calgary. This was the meeting where we (1) raised the membership fees and (2) removed the second award year for the Shaw Prize, based on the perception that there was insufficient money in the kitty to pay for all the good things we wanted to do. I also see that in the past year the CAA made a "profit" exceeding \$35 per member, despite the fact that membership has dropped since we raised the fees.

It would appear that the CAA has overshot the mark by compounding a positive correction to revenues and a negative correction to expenses at the same time, where perhaps one of the two corrections might have sufficed on its own. Thankfully, a surplus is much easier to deal with than a deficit!

Part of the decrease in expenses can be attributed to the non-award of student and other prizes. My own experience as Awards Coordinator (in the past) and Fessenden Award Coordinator (current) has taught me that people don't apply for these awards if they are not vigorously promoted by the CAA. We used to send out a booklet with the awards rules and forms along with the December issue of Canadian Acoustics; this did not happen in 1997 or 1998.

Now that we have turned things around to the better--at least financially speaking--I hope the Executive and Directors will be discussing how to apply the surplus. I have some suggestions:

1. Vigorously promote our student and postgraduate awards;
2. Lower the fees and try to get back some of the members we lost; or

3. Generate some new membership benefits.

I agree that the CAA must maintain a solid financial footing; however, let us not lose sight of the goals of the Association.

Sincerely

David M.F. Chapman  
Past President, CAA

I am happy to reply to Dave Chapman's letter as part of our editor's efforts to stimulate our journal. I have to say that I agree with many of Dave's sentiments and that I was one of those opposed to the large increase in membership fees in 1998. However, I think it is necessary to look a little deeper to find the real cause of our problem. At the 1998 meeting the executive supported the treasurer's recommendation for a modest \$5. fee increase. However, the perhaps overly enthusiastic, group of members at the annual general meeting insisted on a \$15 increase. This was probably not necessary to balance our books and was probably not in accord with the wishes of the majority of the members. The bigger issue is therefore, not so much how much money we may have, but how do we manage an organisation where the typically very small group of members at the annual general meeting can send us of in all directions? I think the answer is that major issues such as fee increases and perhaps voting for the executive and board members should be decided by mail vote.

This would involve changes to our bylaws but even a cursory reading of our bylaws suggests that they are not ideally matched to our current mode of operation. This would be a big job requiring some legal advice but I think it is time to take it on. What do you think?

John Bradley  
President, CAA

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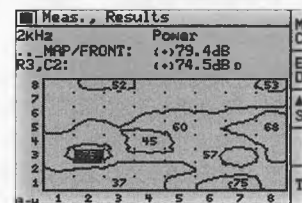
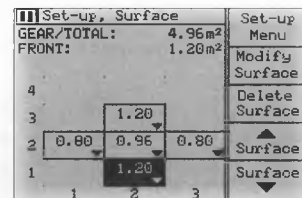
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