

## Managing Director

Well, it's been another tough year for sure, though after the past difficult years we have had, we are now getting more proficient in managing with less resources. It is a great accomplishment to be able to maintain our core operation on a fraction of the budget we used to approve. A lot of nonprofits would like to be able to say the same. What is frustrating is that there are no signs of growth in the foreseeable future. Our membership is still declining in the face of an ever-changing industry. Having said that, we did have some successes in growth.

- Our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual DoodleTrain had its most successful year since the downturn, returning some favorable dollars back to the society. This was partially due to our corporate community taking advantage of group discounts and sending a number of their employees to courses. I have always said sponsorship is nice, but having individuals attend courses makes it sustainable. So, our hats are off to those companies.
- Our Technical Luncheons also showed a surplus, thanks to our event sponsors, attendees and a good working relationship with our venue.
- The GeoConvention also returned important funds back to the society and this went a long way to assist our organization.

These modest returns have given other non-revenue generating committees an opportunity to actually look ahead and plan a bit more into the future – something that we haven't been able to do for a while.

We continue to strategically plan and this helps us stay the course and consider what the future might hold for the CSEG. Since 2016, when Marian Hanna stepped into the President's position, planning has been the number one priority. Since then, Presidents John Duhault and Ron Newman have carried that torch to help achieve some modest successes. With Neda Boroumand replacing Ron this April and Geoff Fraser to follow in 2020, we have some very important continuity in place. Both Neda and Geoff have already served 3 and 2 years respectively. This is important to our future. It maybe wasn't by design, but I will tell you – continuity is more important than ever right now.

Looking ahead in 2018, the Board of Directors had no choice but to plan again for the same or slightly lesser results. Budgeting conservatively is very important in these times. We have not been able to ratify a balanced budget since 2014, as there are so many unknowns. However, if our programs match their results from 2018, we should see no less than a modest deficit or a slight surplus, without dipping further into our lifesaving financial reserve.

We will plan to continue offering a similar program as in the past; however, it will begin to look a bit different. As I said, last year the digital world has knocked on our door and it is now time it is

welcomed in. There are a number low cost initiatives underway, but we also feel at some point we will have to spend some of our reserve to make other potential projects materialize. Keeping a solid reserve is very important. I know firsthand, as we lost one third of it in two years – very scary. Having said that, you have to spend a few dollars to encourage growth and bring the society up to speed technically. That is what we are currently weighing out right now. Change is coming fast and quick and we are doing our best to plan for this. So your support of our core programs will hopefully provide us with more resources to achieve some of these goals.

Finally, as I begin my 20th year with the CSEG (I know it is hard to believe) I must recognize the two boards I work for: the CSEG Board and the CSEG Foundation Board. Every member has worked hard to make the society viable and relevant. Certainly, I correspond mostly with the President (Ron), Past President (John) and Vice President (Neda), but all directors play such an important role. All are very committed, and along with the many volunteers serving on our committees, are the lifeblood of the CSEG. Our volunteer base is unique among technical and professional societies in today's world. As well, my co-worker Alyssa Middleton has been strength of support for me and works extremely hard for both the CSEG and Foundation. She is a very committed and dedicated employee who is willing to tackle anything. With Alyssa currently on maternity leave, we were very fortunate to find Jodi Sharman to assist me and the boards in her absence. As our industry and the financial environment continue to change, it is our commitment to the membership to provide the best service and information possible, while always seeking new initiatives to benefit our membership. So, keep renewing your memberships, keep attending our programs... And volunteer where you can.

### **JIM RACETTE**

CSEG MANAGING DIRECTOR