

From The President:

Well four years has gone by in a flash. This will be my last newsletter as president. I want to thank the membership for giving me the opportunity to serve. I joined NACA back in 96 or 97. In those days it took quite a while for the paperwork to go through and to be accepted at the next convention, so while I am certain I sent paperwork in in 1996, I don't think I was approved until the convention in 1997. I was working in LA doing wind claims in the early part of 1997. I flew into Las Vegas for my first convention, it was held at Treasure Island. That place was so big if there weren't signs everywhere, you could never find your way around. It was my first time to Vegas, what an experience; it was my first time to California, what an even bigger experience, people are different in LA. They say it never rains in California, well it rained most of the time I was there, about 5 weeks or so. I remember flying into California and seeing the vast suburban area once you go over a mountain range from the east. You seem to fly forever over towns and suburban areas until you get to LAX. The California metropolitan area was huge, way different than the concentrated area of the NY metro area. Flying into Vegas was also unbelievable, brown everywhere and then a city pops up in the middle of nowhere.

My first introduction into the catastrophe business was the winter of 1993 -1994. I was working for a small independent in NY that got hired by Pilot to do freeze and snow related claims. I thought this was the best business in the entire world. It was the American Way, you work hard, you make money, it was that simple. I asked my boss, Cliff Smith, at the independent firm if he would be upset if I tried to go with Pilot full time. He was a gentleman and our paths have crossed a few times over the years. I asked the Pilot supervisor, Mickey Hamilton how I could get into the business. The rest they say is history. I told / tell people it took me twenty years to find a real job. I had had three other careers already by that time and there was no question this was the best thing in my business life that had ever happened to me up until that point. I met great people, made lifelong friends, made plenty of money and traveled all over the country. I saw parts of the country over the next 5 years that I never would have gone to. It opened my eyes to a world outside of New York. It was not without sacrifice, my children grew up while I was on the road, but I was able to provide a life for them that I never could have done had I stayed local. There was a point where I was pretty much away for two straight years, that is a long time in the life of a kid. The CAT business also afforded me to move to Florida where business opportunities presented themselves and the insurance industry was quite different than the way it was done in New York. Independents were more the norm than the exception in Florida, the storm business was plentiful. I could tell stories for hours and I am sure all of you can do the same.

It is a certain type of person that becomes a "CAT" Adjuster. They are made from the same type of mold; my background is typical of a "CAT Adjuster in my opinion. They have been around the block a few times, been knocked down a few times, have an entrepreneurial spirit, they are seasoned and usually on at least their second career.

My goal over the past four years has been to increase membership and to leave NACA in a sound financial position. I have tried all that I knew to increase membership; it has proven to be a real challenge. The financial task was an easier one. We have succeeded in leaving the organization in a much better position than where it was four years ago. We have implemented several innovations over the past years and the next board will be able to continue with those improvements. As always I encourage you, the membership to get involved and bring your thoughts and ideas forward. The organization needs new blood; this will be the challenge for future boards and you.

The convention is shaping up, registration is open. Please sign up early, it helps us in planning. Please, please, please, support the organization by staying at the host hotel. The organization has to guarantee a certain amount of room nights, food and beverage consumption, etc. in order to secure the meeting space that is needed for this type of function. We need your help in doing this. The "Main Event" is going to be a lot of fun; you will most certainly want to attend. What could be better, you get "The Main Event", our special guests "The Rat Pack" and Marilyn Monroe, a Gambling Instruction themed Vendor Show, multiple CE classes, NFIP certification, Earthquake certification; it is a convention not to be missed!

See you in Vegas!