

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Not long ago, a friend here at work mentioned that no one should let a good crisis go to waste. As 2020 continues to provide one crisis after another, I find that there are no truer words. It is with these words in mind

that the NTOA staff accepted and embraced the challenge of presenting our first-ever virtual conference. I would be lying if I did not admit that there was a steep learning curve of technological challenges, primarily for me, but the staff rose to the occasion and ensured the event was completed without incident. By all accounts, the feedback we have received from participants is that it was a huge success. As a biased observer, I could not agree more.

I will admit that as an old school guy, I was a bit unsettled as to how this e-learning would work and what it would feel like compared to in-class instruction. Having participated in several of the virtual classes, I can honestly say that it was outstanding. I truly felt present with the instructors and thought they did an excellent job sharing the information as well as answering any questions presented. You can read more about our virtual conference beginning on page 22 of this issue.

For those of you who may not have been able to participate, or who are still skeptical about online learning, I would strongly encourage you to attend one of our Tac Talks. These webinars cover current topics in a short (typically 60 minutes) time span. They will give you a “taste” of the e-learning capabilities that we offer. Trust me

when I say that you will be both impressed and pleased with the experience.

I am more convinced than ever that virtual learning will be a part of the NTOA’s future as we work to get critical training to you in these trying times. In furtherance of our goal to increase accessibility and maintain affordability, we will be looking to expand the number of courses that will be available online.

For obvious reasons, these will be classes traditionally offered in a classroom that have been converted to an e-learning format. All of the information will remain the same and even include the ability to interact with the instructor(s). These same classes will continue to be offered in person so that members can pick the option that best fits their needs/style. All of our practical courses will continue to be offered as before.

Please let us know if you have any ideas or suggestions on how we can help you or your team. As we continue to move forward in this crazy year, we are mindful of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus’ saying: “The only thing that is constant is change.” We believe that our blend of traditional and virtual learning classes will allow us to meet you and your teams’ needs in these uncertain and crisis-ridden times. Thank you for your continued service.

Be safe and God Speed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thor Eells". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Thor Eells
Executive Director