

OAA TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy in these challenging times. This special newsletter is about how OAA and OAAAS are responding to the pandemic crisis.

OAA COVID-19 Response

The OAA has closed its office and cancelled its Annual Conference. OAA has also extended the Continuing Education cycle to the end of the year, so if you are a Licensed Technologist OAA, you still have a few months to complete your ConEd requirement. You can find lots of excellent online courses through the OAA website. The OAA has also created a section on the website devoted to providing information for architectural professionals in the current pandemic. All members should check this site regularly: <https://oaa.on.ca/covid-19-faq>.

Architects Bring Expertise to the Fight Against COVID-19

In Italy, one of the countries hardest hit by the virus, a group of architects and engineers has developed an open-source project to convert shipping containers into intensive care units to help hospitals overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients.

Connected Units for Respiratory Ailments (CURA, or Latin for "cure") is harnessing the skills of experts from around the world to develop self-contained, mobile ICUs that can be plugged into hospitals or installed in parking lots. CURA units are more than a giant metal box with a couple of beds inside, as each is set up with negative air pressure, creating a bio-containment environment that restricts the virus from escaping. This is one significant advantage over the tent cities that hospitals around the world are setting up. Yet, containers can be deployed as rapidly as hospital tents, so CURA units can be moved quickly to wherever they are needed.

Since the shipping container size is standard, the CURA design should be easily adaptable. According to the organizers, the most complicated thing is installing the mechanical components needed inside the units to create negative pressure, and to do heating and cooling. Units also need the appropriate medical equipment. If you are interested in helping to bring this model to Canada, check out <https://curapods.org/>.

Stay well and be safe,
Rick Mateljan, SMDA Design Ltd.
OAAAS President



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REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The coronavirus pandemic is dramatically affecting our work and our lives, and is likely to do so for months to come. OAAAS operations and practices are changing in response to developments.

Rommy and I are both working remotely since the OAA office has closed. As we were in the middle of moving all our physical files and records into the newly-renovated OAA offices, establishing a regular staff presence there, and beginning to transfer to a computer system integrated with OAA, it took us longer than others to make this transition. We are sorry if this has meant we failed to respond promptly to any recent communication.

Now that we are set-up remotely, these are our service commitments to you:

- **Rommy Rodriguez will be available Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday each week.** If you email or call (RommyR@oaaas.ca, 416.795.5977) Rommy will answer either the same day, or no later than her next regular work day.
- While my schedule is more flexible, I too expect to respond by the next business day, and certainly no later than the following one (GarryN@oaaas.ca, 416.268.5665).

OAAAS is not accepting cheques in payment of membership dues, or application, examination and other fees. Rommy will provide a Paypal invoice and we will waive the usual administration fee applicable to electronic transfers.

OAAAS has cancelled all activities that require face-to-face contact, including its Board and Committee meetings. OAAAS cancellations also include Advanced Standing Committee interviews and our normal student awards judging process.

Perhaps as a sign of things to come, the Board will hold its first electronic meeting in early May. We expect some of our cancelled events will be held electronically in the coming months. OAAAS will also conduct an electronic judging process to decide our student award winners. We hope to be able to honour them at an event the OAA is considering for the fall.

OAAAS may continue with the June sitting of the Licensed Technologist OAA examination, *as long as we are able to respect physical distancing rules*. If the OAA office is open, we can ensure candidates are sufficiently distant from each other. As an alternative, we may also decide to ask all candidates to find a professional (architect, Lic.Tech.OAA or other) who can act as a proctor to oversee the examination.

Stay tuned for further developments.

Please stay well and keep in touch,
Garry Neil
Executive Director

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Canadian Architects Developing Portable COVID-19 Testing Centres

Since early April, Canadian architecture firm WZMH has been partnering with others to re-purpose shipping containers as Portable Virus Testing Centres (PVTC).

The PVTC is a sea container retrofitted for use as a facility to conduct tests for viruses such as COVID-19. It can be equipped with up to four testing stations that physically and safely separate front-line workers from the general public. While the PVTC is meant to increase the capacity to test for COVID-19 in the near term, it is also designed to meet testing needs in the fall and winter when COVID-19 is expected to re-appear. The portable design allows for deployment at entrances to hospitals, office buildings, schools, as well as construction sites and places of large public events. It can be moved easily to new sites as needed.

The container allows sufficient space to comfortably fit all of the necessary equipment and supplies, enabling the healthcare professional to conduct the test and analyze the collected samples within a fully conditioned space. The PVTC is equipped with DC (low voltage) infrastructure, Wi-Fi, and can include an internal battery system connected to a rooftop solar array, allowing for the operation of the electronics equipment. The service areas include thermal cameras, a secure pass through, and can be equipped with biohazard gloves if required. You can find more information [here](#).