

Tim Gronberg, A Look Back

WAMA's Vice President, Dave Schiavone had the opportunity to interview one of Westchester Aircraft Maintenance Association's Past Presidents.



Well respected in the industry, Tim Gronberg started his Aviation career in 1979. Tim is currently the Manager of the North East Regional Support Office located in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Tim has been with Bombardier Aircraft for 27 years holding various titles. After serving as a FSR for 12 years, in 2006 Tim accepted the position to manage the Learjet Customer Response Center in Wichita. In 2013, he accepted the position of Director in the Customer Support Team in Montreal, Canada taking on several different roles during that time. In 2016, Tim returned to Connecticut for his current position.

I first met Tim back when he was a Senior Field Service Representative located at Westchester Airport in White Plains, NY. We would see each other at WAMA dinner meetings. We both enjoyed the networking, sharing of ideas as well as the informative presentation in the evening. Tim never missed a dinner meeting and always looked forward to seeing customers and friends who shared his Aviation interest.

Tim was looking to help WAMA in any way possible. He immediately volunteered his time and joined The Board of Directors. He helped with membership, as well as being Treasurer and became an important voice on several committees. He recalled some accomplishments working on the tool box awards. The young aviation graduates came from the local aviation schools. WAMA would invite those students as well as their families to a dinner meeting as WAMA presented a student who excelled with his or her grades with a complete set of new tools and a Snap-On box. He also worked on aviation job fairs with several companies and organizations. Tim felt very passionate about putting young aviation professionals together with companies who would offer them an internship or employment. I mentioned to Tim, WAMA is actively looking to do that again by adding a special website page for new graduates seeking intern positions.

Tim became the WAMA President around 1999. He held the position for three years. I continued by asking Tim a few questions:

Q: As an ex-President of WAMA, what does WAMA mean to you?

A: "WAMA is a community of like-minded professionals seeking to maintain high industry standards, social connections and a common interest in the profession."

Q: What do you like or dislike about WAMA?

A: "I like the tradition and history about WAMA. It has that sense of connection and comradery with its members. I am extremely proud to be part of a great organization like WAMA. Well, a dislike would be the inability to bring in younger members together. Many organizations struggle with this problem. We need as an industry to figure that out."

Q: What do you like about our industry? (social or professional)

A: *"I like the broad scope of skills necessary to perform well and the high standards we have set for ourselves. We are seeing a growth in business aviation and our orders are up. I believe they will continue to grow."*

Q: Where do you see our industry going?

A: *"I see new aircraft pushing the envelope. Tech savvy technicians with computer skills are a must. No longer do we listen to the click of a relay to troubleshoot, but rather download NVMs or analyze AHMS diagnostic data."*

Q: With social media now the primary way of networking, do you feel organizations such as WAMA bring a benefit to the industry or to you personally?

A: *"Yes. Information is increasing and its availability in all walks of life. Sometimes for better and at other times, not. WAMA can link its members to educational opportunities, as they have with IA Renewals. What is difficult at this time is to provide the social benefits that the monthly meetings provided along with the networking opportunities that comes with face to face interactions. Tim went on to mention that he spends up to 4 hours or more a day on virtual meetings."*

Q: What type of training is important for the maintenance organizations?

A: *"Targeted training – especially the new technologies we are working with such as Cabin Management Systems (CMS), connectivity, troubleshooting with downloaded data, etc. Much of this is aircraft specific and some across all aircraft types."*

I mentioned that we are currently having a virtual IA meeting along with future training to cover aircraft pre-buys and insurance. Hopefully this will help recruit new WAMA members.

Q: Have you experienced difficulties in getting qualified people?

A: *"Not necessarily for me and my team personally. The service centers certainly experience difficulties. For my team of FSRs, they are all highly skilled individuals who want to advance in their careers, love to troubleshoot problems and the challenge of fixing aircraft. Those types of individuals rise to the top, and they seek out jobs like Field Service."*

Q: What can we do to recruit or bring in young professionals in aviation?

A: *"We need to go beyond the traditional pipeline of candidates from the military and find a way to attract the young person interested in combining an interest in cutting technologies and wanting to work with their hands. Years ago, we ran Aviation Career Fairs with other organizations like WAA and HPN operators. It was hugely successful and targeted at local middle and high school aged students. We had a few retirees on the board that did this full time. Maybe WAMA can recruit some board members that have the time to do that once again."*

Q: Do you feel the schools are turning out the volume or level of knowledge and skill needed today?

A: *"No – not even close. The industry needs to somehow assist in this area."*

Q: What do you think the industry needs to improve on?

A: "I feel higher wages coupled with a higher standard of requirements within our industry is needed. NBAA's Maintenance Manager Program and Flight Safety's Master Technician are a couple examples of this. These are grassroots efforts. I don't believe we will see the FAA moving in that direction anytime soon. Bombardier's Safety Standdown, is another great example of industry led attempts to bring a higher standard to our profession".



Tim with wife, Judy, at the WAMA 50th Dinner dance.

Q: How do you feel about WAMA turning 60?

A: "Tim recalled living in Wichita on assignment when WAMA turned 50. He and his wife, Judy, flew back to NY for that weekend. We had a great time. It was a great dinner dance. We saw many friends and customers. They were all part of a big WAMA family. Being 60, it's really something to be proud of. I will always be proud that I was a part of WAMA. I look back with pride all the time."

Bombardier has been a supporting member for many years. They continue to provide WAMA with valuable training and support.

In closing, on behalf of The Board of Directors and our members, we wish Tim the best of luck and hope to see him and Bombardier Aircraft soon.