

CANADIAN ACOUSTICAL ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, October 5th, 2021 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM (EDT)
by Zoom videoconference

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order 17:10 (EDT) by Jérémie Voix (President).

Jeremy Voix said a few words of welcome to the about 25 people in attendance online and introduced the meeting agenda.

2. President's Report (Jérémie Voix) and Election of the Board

Jérémie gave an overview of various actions and initiatives undertaken by the Association with the Board's approval, including:

- Promotion and support of the TC-43 ISO standardization meeting in Montreal 2023, through advertising of the event in the Association's media and hosting of a dedicated mini-site.
- Creation of a new membership category for retired professionals who are no longer supported by an organization, with annual fees reduced by half.
- Introduction of a free one-year membership or extension of existing membership for all winners of CAA awards.
- Management of advertising in Canadian Acoustics as part of the Open Journal System online portal, essentially creating new types of "membership" (with a given duration and a price matching the number and typeset size of ads they represent) that would be dedicated to advertisers. Among other benefits this will simplify the invoicing process as payment will be made online as part of placing the advertisement.

Jérémie went on to acknowledge that difficulties had occurred with the Open Journal System portal following its migration to a professionally hosted environment and subsequent version upgrades; this caused numerous problems including failure to send automated membership renewal reminders, outages in some web site functions, and complications in the production and distribution of the Journal. He indicated that these issues were being actively tackled and addressed, but a few still lingered.

Jérémie mentioned that they had proposed to the Board new project initiatives, for some of which he appealed for assistance from volunteers among the membership; he highlighted in particular:

- The migration of the main CAA-ACA web site to the latest WordPress environment, with corresponding need to update the underlying theme style.
- The coordination and support of local chapters promoting acoustics knowledge and the activities of the Association, through visibility on the CAA web site, management of distribution lists, and the creation of a "starter kit."
- The creation of a wiki to capture the accrued knowledge and experience of the Association, including manuals and procedures specific to certain roles like Webmaster or Media Editor.

Lastly, Jérémie addressed the subject of composition and renewal of the Board of Directors. He pointed out that the Association has 12 Directors, 7 of whom are members at large and 5 have designated (executive) roles; the mandate is four years (renewable) and currently 5 members were due for election. He noted that at the previous day's Board meeting all current directors had indicated willingness to be reconfirmed in their roles and asked for any nominations for potential new members. None being made, he moved that all present Board members be reconfirmed; the motion was seconded by Daniel Aalto and passed unanimously by (video and/or digital) show of hands. Jérémie then announced that at the request of incumbent Joana Rocha a temporary position on the Board would be formed for a one-year duration (as allowed in the by-laws) for a new Awards' Coordinator. Joana nominated Victoria Duda to replace her in the executive role, and Jérémie solicited the attendees for any alternative nominations. There being none, he proposed the appointment of Victoria, which was seconded by Daniel and unanimously accepted.

3. Treasurer's Report (Dalila Giusti)

Dalila presented a comparative summary of assets over the past few years, explaining the division between capital funding (from which awards are distributed), operating funds (for general expenses) and investments, and pointed out the healthy financial position with \$520,000 in assets. She noted that the Association's principal revenue streams are membership dues, sustaining subscriptions, advertising, and interest; occasionally a donation is received that will support a new award. She then presented a list of award disbursements over the past few years (payout for the current year being \$8,000) along with the earned

interest out of which they are funded. Capital is invested in market funds whose interest fluctuates but can be as high as 25-30% over the long term and have been performing quite well and easily supporting the awards. She noted that last year not all awards were distributed because of disruptions from the pandemic.

Dalila then presented the current year and proposed next year's budget, which predicted a deficit of about \$15,000 albeit based on very conservative assumptions – including no forecast revenue from advertising or the annual conference. Daniel Aalto asked whether the \$10,000 level of support budgeted for students travel to the annual conference would be sufficient based on pre-COVID numbers; Dalila replied that the allocation had been put in place a couple of years back as a means of funding students travel adequately regardless of the fortunes of any given conference. She noted that because of travel restrictions there had not yet been a chance to test the funding for adequacy, but hopefully next year the conference would be held in Newfoundland which would give a real-world scenario to assess the subsidy.

4. Secretary's Report (Roberto Racca)

At the opening of his presentation Roberto noted that the aim of his activity had continued to be to maintain a positive interaction between the Association's general membership and the executive and Board, a role shared with the President as the persons on the executive most involved with regular communications with members and sustainers. He remarked that some challenges with the online platform for management of memberships persisted, as already pointed out by Jérémie, leading to ongoing need for user assistance that he had tried to provide in a timely manner. The pandemic-triggered transition to online events, to replace in-person meetings, primarily the annual conference, also increased the challenge of maintaining a constructive and collaborative level of exchange and networking. Through all this, however, the level of engagement and support from many individuals and organizations has remained encouragingly steadfast.

Turning to the membership figures and their trend over the past 18 months, Roberto noted that the "stimulus package" launched in the summer of 2020 by reinstating recently lapsed members and sustaining subscribers and extending the term of current ones had a positive and seemingly lasting effect in revitalizing the numbers that had dwindled due to missed renewals and other attrition under the combined impact of pandemic concerns and technical issues with the journal management portal. He expressed gratitude at the surge of renewals by members and sustaining subscribers that had taken place in December 2020 as the stimulus period tapered off. The total number of individual memberships as of the date of the AGM stood at 195, including regular (168) and student (27) members, with the number of sustaining subscribers at a very respectable 20. A sustained good showing in the numbers past December 2021, he noted, would be a welcome indication of the re-engagement of our base after the past slump; key to this re-engagement remains an effective communication between executive and membership that will strengthen participation and motivate the renewal of adhesion.

To that end, Roberto concluded, the Board and executive would keep improving the online experience of the main CAA-ACA web site and the Journal and membership / subscription portal, to provide engaging content and timely updates. He noted that activities of the Association and announcements of interest to the acoustics community are regularly posted on the web site and social media, and heartily invited all involved following them. In closing he reiterated that in his role as executive secretary he remained always at people's disposal to be approached with questions, concerns and suggestions that would be promptly addressed and/or passed along to other members of the Board and the executive.

5. Awards Coordinator's Report (Joana Rocha)

Joana opened her address with the remark that the most current information about award winners had been communicated to webmaster Philip Tsui and updated on the CAA-ACA web site for people to look up. Highlighting some points of her formal report given to the Board the previous day, she acknowledged Sean Pecknold having replaced temporarily Stan Dosso as coordinator for Shaw postdoctoral award to avoid a conflict of interest given the related affiliation of a candidate. She noted that with the help of the CAA media editor, Romain Dumoulin, this year the application and deadlines information for the various awards had been publicized on CAA social media platforms, such as Twitter and LinkedIn. And she indicated that the three winners of major awards this year had confirmed that they would be attending the virtual Acoustics Week in Canada meeting and thus on hand to receive their prizes at the Award Ceremony on 7 October.

Joana mentioned the imminent transition of her duties as Award Coordinator to Victoria Duda, newly appointed to a temporary position on the Board for the next year. She indicated that she had been working with Victoria to facilitate the transition by making available and clarifying the documentation associated with the role. She then presented a list of winners for the awards granted this year along with the subject of the winning papers, and she thanked the coordinators of individual prizes for their work. She remarked that despite the coordinators' best efforts to solicit candidates some of the prizes had seen no applicants, and while the pandemic might have been a factor the lack of entries had also occurred in past years. Joana encouraged members of the Association to publicize the CAA awards and attract candidates to them.

During the questions and comments period Jérémie noted that there would be three subject-specific student presentation prizes granted this year, one for each day of the ongoing virtual conference, as well as an overall student video presentation quality award selected by an audience vote. Olivier Robin, chair of the conference, gave a quick overview of the adjudication process for the daily awards, selected by the committee, and the public voting process done online via the conference portal. Bryan Gick raised the question of whether presentation awards should continue to be open only to graduate students or should be extended to undergraduates as well, given that the latter are fully entitled to present at the conference and publish in the proceedings issue. Jérémie thanked Bryan for bringing up a valid point and noted that this fell in the scope of a broader reassessment of eligibility criteria that Joana and Victoria would be undertaking and presenting to the Board for deliberation ahead of the next conference.

6. Editor's Report (Umberto Berardi)

Umberto reported that Volume 49, the current year's, was on a good track with the first three issues having been published and the fourth well underway. The June issue had included a special tribute to Ramani Ramakrishnan, a long-time former editor-in-chief of Canadian Acoustics, on his retirement; the September issue had been slimmer than usual for a conference edition due to fewer contributions of proceeding papers, but still regular sized. He remarked that the publication had a fruitful year despite the slowing down of research activities due to the pandemic: submissions had been steady, and the journal was attracting national and international attention. He encouraged members of the acoustics community at large to contribute to the journal, including shorter features and practitioners-oriented content.

Umberto commented on the fact that 2022 would see the publication of Volume 50 of the journal, and it was a considerable achievement for a publication to reach 50 years of uninterrupted run. He again exhorted members to contribute features to this special volume and stated his commitment to dedicate the time and effort necessary to move forward all submitted articles promptly through the editorial process. Daniel Aalto asked what the timeline would be for submissions to be considered for the "jubilee" issue. Umberto noted that there were four issues in Volume 50 and so it would be a rolling timeline for an article to appear in one of them, also depending on the peer review process. He mentioned two to three months as an indicative time between submission of a typical paper and when it would be ready for publishing, keeping then in mind the quarterly editorial schedule for the actual publication. In response to a question by Gillian de Boer about whether there would be a particular theme for the volume, Umberto indicated that there were no plans for themed content at least for the first two issues, which would feature the regular range of contributed articles. He further noted that a topical issue has the drawback of pushing any pending articles not related to that subject further down the line for publication. He suggested that a special content could be envisaged for the fourth issue of Volume 50, to appear in December 2022; rather than a special topic issue, however, it would more likely be a regional issue featuring papers about diverse research topics in acoustics but all originating from the same Canadian geographic region.

Jérémie thanked Umberto for his dedication to the difficult task of running the journal and his willingness to be open to new ideas and suggestions that contribute to the calibre of the publication. In closing Jérémie noted that as a regrettable side effect of the hosting server migration mentioned earlier, Google Scholar had blocked indexing of the journal contents. He was now in the process of filling and submitting the necessary paperwork to have the block lifted and indexing restored.

7. Social Media Editor Report (Romain Dumoulin)

Jérémie gave a presentation on behalf of Romain Dumoulin who could not attend the meeting, with the preamble that visibility on the internet is now an essential requirement for any organization and Romain had been hired two years earlier with the specific goal to establish an online presence for the Association. The aim had been achieved solidly on two social media platforms that could be defined as "traditional": LinkedIn and Twitter. Referring to statistics provided by Romain, Jérémie noted that the CAA-ACA group on LinkedIn had reached a membership of 929, adding 86 new members and 14 moderated posts since April 2021. The Association's Twitter account counted 503 followers, 226 tweets and 208 "likes" in total, with 37 followers, 25 tweets and 28 "likes" added over the same six-month period. Content has included relaying of "job alert" posts from the web site, announcements of new issues of Canadian Acoustics or conference related news, and publications, posts and events from CAA members or the broader acoustics community. Planned actions are to add items like "gems from the past" excerpts from the Canadian Acoustics archives and to provide enhanced alerting of job opportunities for Association members.

8. Conferences Present and Future

Jérémie opened the topic with a comment about the importance of Acoustics Week in Canada to the cohesion of the acoustical community across the country and the expansion of intellectual horizons for students in this field – something that would not be possible in a larger organization where specific branches of acoustics tend to be siloed in interest groups. He went on to

compliment Olivier Robin for his successful organizing of the current virtual conference and the previous year's online event and gave him the floor.

AWC 2021: Virtual meeting (Olivier Robin, Chair)

Sharing a short slide presentation, Olivier gave an overview of the status of AWC 2021 so far. He noted that the event had originally been planned to be held in October 2020 in Sherbrooke, Québec, then postponed in the early months of the COVID pandemic to a year later, still hoping for a physical meeting. The ongoing uncertainty surrounding travel and gatherings later forced the plans to be changed to the virtual event currently unfolding. The technology adopted for the virtual meeting was a combination of the classical platform Zoom for the plenaries and a more immersive virtual environment, Gather, for other presentations. The organizers leveraged the use of recorded video presentations as a means of making the online sessions less stressful; they also simplified the structure of the conference to three main topics, one for each day: "Sound and objects" on Day 1, "Sound and human beings" on Day 2, and "Sound and computers" on Day 3. The call for papers attracted 6 two-page papers and 13 abstracts for Day 1, 15 papers and 7 abstracts for Day 2, and 4 papers and 3 abstracts for Day 3 which also featured the award ceremony. 6 exhibitors enrolled to participate virtually, and Olivier publicly acknowledged them for their support. The organizers chose to place exhibitors and presenters in a single room in the Gather meeting environment, to facilitate an exchange between the groups of exhibitors, professionals, and students which in a physical setting would tend to remain more isolated. For Day 1 just concluded, the online attendance was about 40 people; Olivier noted the difficulty of attracting a large audience to a virtual meeting given the overload of such events in today's professional life. He noted that the next day had the largest program and might gather a more sizeable group.

Jérémie congratulated Olivier for the well-conceived organizing and moved on to the plans for future events. He confirmed that AWC 2022 was planned as an in-person event in St John's, Newfoundland, under the guidance of Ben Zedel and Len Zedel. On behalf of the Chairs, Jérémie gave a few updates on the progress of the organizing: the venue (Sheraton Hotel) had been booked for the 27th to 30th of September, somewhat earlier than the traditional week for the conference in the past. Jérémie expressed hope that people would gather in good numbers for a successful return to in-person events despite the relative remoteness of the location. Beyond 2022, he pointed out, there were no clear plans yet for AWC. He noted again the ISO TC 43 event in Montréal in 2023 and remarked that INTERNOISE 2025 might be in Ottawa and hosted by Joana Rocha and colleagues, which could offer an opportunity for a major joint event with AWC. Joana added an update on the prospects of INTERNOISE 2025 being in Ottawa, saying that they had submitted an informal proposal to I-INCE and we are waiting to hear back before the year's end about assembling a full bid package.

9. Varia

Olivier Robin noted that some action is needed to make the Association more visible and interesting to the public and media; he suggested as a worthwhile initiative to consider the creation of a noise map of Canada through the contribution from ordinary persons equipped with a smartphone noise capture application. Olivier had already been in touch with the Noise Planet team in France who had conceived the original concept and the app, and he suggested that properly promoted this could be a prominent initiative with strong public and news interest potential. There was positive response to the idea of meeting participants.

10. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Jérémie, seconded by Daniel.

The meeting adjourned at 18:20 (EDT)