

# CANADIAN ACOUSTICAL ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 2:30 PM – 5:30 PM (EDT)

by Zoom videoconference

### 1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 14:35 (EDT)

Board members present online: Jérémie Voix (chair), Alberto Behar, Umberto Berardi, Bill Gastmeier, Bryan Gick, Dalila Giusti, Michael Kieffe, Andy Metelka, Hugues Nélisse, Roberto Racca, Joana Rocha, Frank Russo, Mehrzad Salkhordeh.

Jérémie introduced the proposed agenda which was approved after minor discussion of the items.

### 2. President's report (Jérémie Voix)

Jérémie presented to the Board for discussion various action and initiatives undertaken or proposed, including:

- Promotion and support of the TC43 ISO standardization meeting in Montreal 2023, through advertising of the event in the Association's media and hosting of a dedicated mini site. The event will be hosted at ETS, and various members of the CAA are involved in its organizing.
- Creation of a new membership category for retired professionals who are no longer supported by an organization, with annual fees reduced by half, and introduction of a free one-year membership or extension of existing membership for all winners of CAA awards. Jérémie noted that these changes would be presented to the Association's membership and opened for any comments during the AGM.
- 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; it will also enable advertisers to access the current issues of the journal (including the ones featuring their content) for the duration of their ad run.

Jérémie noted that he and Cécile Le Cocq had begun implementing the framework for advertising support in the OJS but had been diverted from the task by other issues to be urgently addressed with that platform (see below); they were now again set to complete the task. Dalila remarked that unless a human coordinator was involved there would not be retention of advertisers because of lack of follow-up. She pointed out that a system which simply dropped ad runs automatically if not pre-paid or renewed would likely result in loss of interest on the part of advertisers, and a human coordinator likely would remain necessary to maintain business relations. Further discussion followed, and it was agreed to go ahead with the new system as the underlying framework but likely maintain a person involved in the volunteer role of liaison with advertisers.

Moving on to new business, Jérémie mentioned 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 due to scripts having broken, and other complications. He indicated that these issues were being actively tackled and addressed but a few still lingered, including the side effect of Google Scholar having de-indexed the journal content due to the change in hosting – something that Jérémie was actively engaged in restoring.

Jérémie went on to present a list of major projects for which volunteer were required and, in some cases, had already been identified. The projects, each of which Jérémie described in some detail, were as follows:

- Revamping and migration of web site to latest WordPress (no volunteers yet)
- Inventory of acoustical training programs across Canada (Umberto)
- Operation manual and procedures update (Michael)
- Solicitations for Practitioners Corner (Alberto; Bill willing to assist)

- Canadian Acoustics web portal language pack revamping (Roberto)
- Local chapters' starter kit (no volunteers yet)
- Adaptation of "What's an acoustician?" video to a Canadian audience (Andy will look at technical feasibility)
- Implementation of CAA manuals and procedures as an online wiki (no volunteers yet)

To conclude his presentation, Jérémie queried the Board about the continuation or renewal of their roles, to coordinate for the AGM the next day. He asked whether Board members whose 4-year terms were up for renewal would be willing to stay in their roles and received confirmation that all would. Jérémie welcomed the commitment of current Board members but he noted that in the longer term each director should keep in mind the need for both continuity and renewal, so potentially consider successors to nominate and especially for members of the executive, candidates who could replace them well in their role. He also noted the importance of diversity and inclusion in the composition of the Board and suggested that a more balanced gender ratio could be sought in considering successors.

### **3. Treasurer's report (Dalila)**

Dalila opened with an apology for not having been able to participate in the previous year's fall BoD meeting due to an overwhelming professional commitment at the time and noted that her report, though brief, would be somewhat of a hybrid of what she would have presented then and the current one. She noted that the Association was doing well financially and fulfilling its role of supporting the acoustics community for example by giving out \$8,000 in awards this year at the virtual conference.

Dalila reported that all tax filing obligations of the Association had been met and as per usual, HST rebates had been received for both 2019 and 2020. She explained that her budget review this year would not include a comparison against actuals for FY 2021 since a budget forecast had not been filed, so the proposed budget for FY 2022 would be based on the 2021 actuals. No changes in membership fees would be recommended (the last increase had been in 2019) as the current income position was satisfactory. In reply to a question from Roberto, Dalila remarked that the introduction of a discounted membership rate only for retired members would not substantially affect the budget; Jérémie noted that it would likely in fact lead to retaining or regaining memberships that we'd lose otherwise as older members left the active profession.

Highlighting some key entries in the 2021 actuals, Dalila noted that advertising revenue was an issue since it was down to barely over \$1,000 in large part due to non-collection (which she and the advertising coordinator would try to rectify) but even with that shortfall, and the lack of any conference proceeds, the revenue had covered expenses with a small margin which was essentially the desired financial position for the Association. Moving to the FY 2022 proposed budget, Dalila noted she had forecast a shortfall of ~\$15K but that was based on very conservative assumptions such as zero advertising revenue, so it was fully expected that the outcome would be substantially better.

Roberto moved to accept the Treasurer's report, seconded by Jérémie; carried unanimously.

### **4. Secretary's report (Roberto)**

Roberto presented a categorized table of the various membership and subscription figures and their trend over the past 18 months. He noted that a year and a half had passed since the introduction of the "stimulus package" in the summer of 2020 whereby recently lapsed members and sustaining subscribers had been reinstated and the term of current memberships had been extended, with the aim of re-engaging people as well as reintroducing them in the cycle of renewal reminders and other contacts. This had shown a positive and seemingly lasting effect in revitalizing the numbers that had dwindled due to missed renewals and other attrition. Indeed, the surge in numbers induced by the package had predictably settled at its tapering off at the end of December 2020, but a satisfactory wave of renewals by members and sustaining subscribers had taken place at that time that kept the levels buoyed. The total number of individual memberships as of the date of the BoD meeting stood at 195, including regular (168) and student (27) members, with the number of sustaining subscribers at a very respectable 20. Roberto commented that the numbers had picked up somewhat even after the critical renewal period of end December, partly because of the requirement to be a member to participate in this year's online version of Acoustics Week in Canada. He noted that a key to this continued re-engagement remains an effective communication between executive and membership that will strengthen participation and motivate the renewal of adhesion.

Moving to other matters Roberto noted that past problems with completing renewals and purchases on the OJS had largely faded away, and the main cause of queries he received from prospective members or subscribers had to do with the understanding of rights and benefits associated with individual categories (for example, a sustaining subscriber wondering about “membership” status for their organization). Roberto welcomed the opportunity outlined by Jérémie to revamp the language packs behind the OJS pages to make the terms and definitions clearer and unambiguous, which he expected would enhance the experience of people using the portal and lead to greater engagement.

In a brief question period that followed, Joana asked about the accuracy of the statistics presented; Roberto explained that they were obtained from direct queries of the database for active status and current expiry date, and Dalila noted that she could cross-verify the numbers against individual payments received online. Joana raised the further point that with an online payment system accessible from the OJS there could be concerns about security of our web portal; Roberto commented on the level of watchfulness against security breaches maintained by Jérémie and others involved in system administration, and Jérémie noted the recent transition in OJS hosting for security reasons and the responsiveness of the OJS open-source community to discovery of any new hacks or vulnerabilities, with patches issued very promptly.

## **5. Awards Coordinator’s report (Joana Rocha)**

Before formally presenting her report Joana made some remarks about the inconsistent updating of the awards information on the CAA-ACA web site and indicated that she had been working with the webmaster to ensure that the lists of recipients and other details are current. Highlighting some points of her formal report, 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 also 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. 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. Still, despite that enhanced exposure and the individual coordinators’ efforts to solicit candidates, some of the prizes had seen no applicants. Joana also brought up the point that for several years the granting of the Directors’ Awards for best papers in Canadian Acoustics had not taken place; there was a general sense among the Board that they should be reactivated, whilst recognizing that the selection process was an onerous one.

Joana 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 also noted that the student presentation prizes would be awarded over the three-day AWC virtual conference that would start the next day. Lastly, she mentioned that owing to a new responsibility she had assumed at her institute she would no longer be able to fulfill the position of Awards Coordinator and she had already informed Jérémie of her intention to hand over the role to a colleague at the University of Montreal, Victoria Duda, of whom she gave a brief professional overview. Joana stated willingness to maintain her role on the Board whereas Victoria would only take up the Award Coordinator’s position. This announcement prompted considerable discussion among other directors about whether the position should be linked to being on the Board, and how the process would unfold in the framework of Board renewal and continuity. In final analysis it was determined that under the Continuation provisions an additional position on the Board could be created on an annual basis, and on that basis the Board agreed to bring in Victoria as an interim additional member in her new position.

## **6. Present and Upcoming Meetings**

AWC 2021 – Virtual: (Chair: Olivier Robin)

- Jérémie presented a brief overview of event to be hosted virtually by the University of Sherbrooke for the following three days, noting that Olivier Robin could not join in to report to the Board personally as he was quite busy setting up and testing the system.
- All registrants would have received a private link unique to their e-mail address to join the event on a platform called Gather ([www.gather.town](http://www.gather.town)); this was not a free meeting with open participation but required enrollment much like a regular congress.
- Registration and online payment had been set up through the CAA-ACA conference management portal and worked similarly to the OJS membership & subscription management platform.

- Each of the three days of the event was scheduled to run from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm EDT save the last day that would extend to 4:30 pm to include the award ceremony; each day would begin with an hour-long plenary invited lecture.

#### AWC 2022 – St-John’s: (guest Len Zedel, AWC 2022 co-chair)

- Len informed that he and his co-chair Ben Zedel did not have much to report save that they had finalized the booking of the conference hotel. They were somewhat on standby, but they would begin planning in earnest very soon.
- Jérémie commented that as soon as the present virtual conference was over it would be the logical time to switch over all planning to AWC 2022 and to begin, start adding content and details to the year-specific web site and prepare to send out a formal announcement and call for papers to appear in the December issue of Canadian Acoustics.

#### ISO TC43 Plenary – Montréal 2023: (Jérémie Voix)

- Everything on course; already discussed briefly earlier in the meeting.

#### AWC 2023 – Proposal of Ryerson

- Jérémie remarked that the plan to host the 2023 event in Ottawa was no longer valid (see later) and suggested that possibly Ryerson could have considered advancing to that year their hosting of the event that had been originally offered for 2025. Umberto commented that likely he would have been too busy to be the chair of such an event in 2023 and noted as well that in terms of geographic representation it would have been preferable to hold the 2023 AWC at a location in western or central Canada.
- After some discussion the Board left open the option to seek interest from potential organizers in the western or prairie Provinces, but not rule out other geographic options altogether.

## **7. Editor’s report (Umberto)**

Umberto gave a quick overview of the issues published so far in the year: the first (March) was a regular issue, the second (June) mostly so as well but it included a special tribute to Ramani Ramakrishnan on his retirement, with his photo on the cover and some nice words in the editorial and in a special contributed feature by various people. The September issue had been posted online a couple of days before, and printed copies were making their way to people. Umberto commented that five accepted regular papers had been awaiting publication, but they had not been added to the conference issue (although a little thinner than normal) so as not to alter its identity as a collection of proceedings. That meant that with three further papers accepted over the summer, there would be no difficulty filling up a solid December issue.

For 2022 Umberto mentioned that there could be the opportunity to consider either a topic issue or a regional issue; he noted that a couple of specialized issues had been produced in recent years and there had been a successful run of regional issues for Montreal, Toronto, and British Columbia. On the matter of special issues, he remarked that they could be a vehicle to give the journal greater international exposure, as a call for papers on a relevant specialized subject might be answered by a geographically wider circle of researchers – and the resulting issue would likely garner greater interest in the journal. On the matter of visibility Umberto commented on the fact that because of technical issues mentioned earlier by Jérémie the journal had temporarily lost indexing by Google, but the situation was getting back on track. Lack of indexing would not necessarily affect the core readership of the journal but would impact the wider international exposure of its content.

Umberto moved on to discussing the matter of the journal’s three-person editorial board, which had heavily relied on Ramani who was now retiring and making corresponding life plans. Decisions would have to be made on future roles and responsibilities also depending on how much Ramani wished to remain involved in the longer term. Regarding roles associated with the journal, Umberto also mentioned that there was an ongoing dearth of reviewers in the subjects of underwater acoustics and bioacoustics (which also receive a lower volume of contributions than by rights they should).

Lastly Umberto advised the Board on a couple of practical points, one related to the physical (print) version of the journal and the other to its virtual existence. On the physical side he mentioned that he had been consistently archiving a few extra copies of each issue of the journal, and that Ramani upon retiring had added a considerable cache of earlier editions going back many years; those back issues could be used to satisfy subscribers’ requests for missing copies or possibly for archival uses. On the virtual side, he remarked that currently the Association only advertises on its social media channels the publishing of a new issue of the journal, so a media shout-out every three months. He advised that it would be far more effective to post on a

monthly (or even more frequent) basis links to individual articles with excerpts and illustrations as other journals do, adding value to any content published in Canadian Acoustics. He noted that in the post-COVID environment many journals more commercially driven than Canadian Acoustics may struggle, and that gives us a unique opportunity to stake out recognition as a relevant and sought-after academic publishing target.

## **8. Social Media Editor report (Romain Dumoulin)**

Jérémie gave a presentation on behalf of Romain Dumoulin who could not attend the meeting. 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. Romain is beginning to take a more creative role in the production of posts, rather than mostly re-posting information from other sources; some of the 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.

## **9. Varia**

Bryan inquired whether there had been any action on a suggestion made at a previous Board meeting that the Hétu prize book award be complemented or replaced by a monetary sum. Dalila raised the point that the monetary value of various awards should likely be reassessed and increased; some discussion ensued which further broadened the issue, and the Board agreed that a comprehensive review of existing and potentially new awards would have to be undertaken at the next meeting.

## **10. Next meeting**

April 2022, date to be decided, by virtual conference.

## **11. Motion to adjourn**

By Jérémie, at 17:40 (EDT)