

SUMMARY RECORD
of the
MEETING OF TAC AREA REPRESENTATIVES
at the AGM in Vancouver, 2009

The annual meeting of the Area Representatives was held at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, July 24th , 2009. Bob Anglin, Area Reps Co-ordinator, chaired the meeting with 13 representatives present.

1. How music is being played in classes

The first topic discussed was how music was being played in classes. The variety described ranged from CDs, laptops, ipods and in the case of San Francisco, use of live music in alternate weeks. Most laptops used were owned by the teacher of the class, but one group had purchased five Apple computers for the use of teachers. The ability to change the speed of the recorded music was an important consideration. SloDown is one program being used which costs US\$60. Another is called Atomix MP3. It is being replaced by a newer version called Virtual DJ. Anselm Lingnau is reportedly writing a free program for this purpose that should be available soon. A factor to consider is the ability to change the speed of the music as it is being played, if it appears to be too slow or too fast for the particular dancers, the condition of the hall etc. This cannot be done on the ipod at present. It can be changed ahead of time on a computer and then loaded on the ipod. Those using computers stated that it was initially time consuming to load CDs including the names of each track. Another consideration was amplification. Some had experienced limits using laptops that were acceptable for a smaller class or venue. It was agreed that effective amplifiers are getting smaller and this possible problem may be resolved soon.

2. Increasing TAC membership

The second topic to be considered was increasing TAC membership. It was suggested that new teacher candidates be encouraged to join TAC. This is done already in North America. One rep observed that until a teacher is dancing outside his/her own group and meeting other teachers, the benefits of TAC may not be apparent. TAC members could recruit new members just as they would recruit new dancers. Communication is important and sharing information on TAC activities, TACTalk would be helpful. In response to a question of clarification, all teachers who are members of TAC must be RSCDS members. It was noted that 45% of TAC members live in the United States, 35% are Canadian and the remainder are spread worldwide overseas. It is helpful in getting new members to have the AGM and Summer School move to different areas to raise the profile of TAC. In some areas, it may be possible for the Area Rep to organize a workshop or a class for teachers in their role as TAC Area Rep.

3. Help for non-qualified teachers

In some areas, classes are being taught by teachers with no RSCDS qualifications. The third topic was should TAC be offering help and encouragement to seek training. TAC has start-up kits as part of the Outreach program that could be helpful. RSCDS is planning a pre-teacher level course for those who might consider becoming qualified teachers. It was noted that many untrained teachers are not interested in help or in obtaining qualifications. Other reps believed that TAC has more pressing issues to consider.

4. Use of non-RSCDS standard terminology

Several teachers use both the popular term such as “hello, goodbye setting” as well as the RSCDS term i.e. “set to corners and partner”. It was noted that non-standard terminology can result from the use of Minicribs as well as from the descriptions in many popular, modern dances. Some reps thought that use of Minicribs should be discouraged because of errors and wrong terminology while others thought they were useful as a base and could be amended. All agreed that they are hazardous and should be checked and

amended, if necessary. Since many dancers only dance in their local group, they may only be aware of the locally used terminology. The consensus was that there is not widespread use of non-standard terminology by itself. Usually the RSCDS terms are used as well. It was noted that sometimes use of a popular term is more memorable and shorter in a briefing.

5. Technique for social classes

There are many social classes according to the reports from Area Reps. Are dances just being briefed or is there still lots of instruction on phrasing, how to do formations, social aspects etc.?

Those attending the meeting agreed that there are a lot of social classes, even most classes in some large areas. "Technique by stealth" was used by one social class teacher. Others offered "helpful tips". Where there are only social classes and a dancer is eager to learn more, videos can be a good resource. Some expressed the opinion that many in social classes only want more dances and are not interested in dancing well. A rep commented that some dancers attend more than one class and the other class may be a more structured teaching class.

The question was raised concerning the value of dancing proficiency exams. In one area, keen dancers who were not interested in becoming teachers, had tried the exams. They were very discouraged because almost all failed. Level one was quite simple, but level two was hard and equivalent to candidate training. Level three was even higher. It was not clear what standard HQ is looking for. One rep commented that while we should support dancers who want to improve, we don't want to encourage elitist dancers who are not willing to dance with others in a social setting. It was noted that these proficiency exams might be useful in the UK where there are adjudicated competitions, but in North America, SCD is a social activity. There are also competitions in New Zealand the rep for that area noted. It was suggested that it might be valuable to run the course for dancing proficiency but offer a certificate for having attended rather than a pass or fail. This could be more encouraging for dancers. The San Francisco Bay area has three demonstration groups and has recently opened one of those classes to dancers who just want to learn more and this has worked well.

6. TACBooks and TACSound Prices

An area rep raised the question of the high cost of items from TACBooks and TACSound. TACBooks acquire their stock from many sources which involves currency exchanges and postage costs. Prices must cover the costs of obtaining the book and delivering the order. A small markup is added to cover fluctuating currency and postal rates. TACSound may acquire CDs at a discount from the musicians or from a business such as Highlander. TACSound prices must not undercut those charged by these sources or TAC would not be able to obtain music from them. TACSound also must cover currency exchanges on some items and postal cost. The rates for air postage have been climbing since so much is now done electronically. Overseas rates are particularly high. Planning well ahead to allow for surface rates is an alternative.

7. How to deal with dancers in advanced classes at workshops who are not advanced dancers

This issue was raised by an area rep and all agreed it is a common problem. In New Zealand, the dancer's teacher must sign the application form for the appropriate class. This helps but does not cover all situations. In some areas, dancers are placed in classes by a committee of teachers who screen the applications. When a dancer is unknown, a call may be placed to a teacher in the relevant area for advice. A class for teachers and those interested in becoming teachers can offer a challenge for more advanced dancers. Several areas only have two levels of classes – Basic and Intermediate/Advanced. The Intermediate/Advanced is often large and needs to be split and can be done so in a way to stream the classes, again by a committee of teachers. All agreed with the final comment that there never is a perfect class.

TAC Area Reps Update, June 2009 [emailed 06/28/09-23:37]

Hello everyone,

Here is the latest update after our executive meeting in mid June. This is a short one because most of the work organizing events for the summer is done and there is not much more the executive can do until the chickens come home to roost in September.

Correspondence

We usually send out letters of congratulation to all successful candidates in four years but this has become somewhat of a challenge. For reasons of privacy, the RSCDS no longer releases addresses. We are trying other ways to find out where they live but if you know of someone who didn't get a letter, it's most likely because we couldn't find their address.

Finances

There has been some concern about our income covering all our expenses - particularly the cost of mailing copies of TACTalk. There will probably be a motion presented at the AGM to alter our membership fee structure accordingly. Don't panic! If you are willing to receive TACTalk electronically, your membership fee could go down.

2009 AGM

At present there are about 90 registered.

2009 Summer School

As of May 27th, there were 192 registered plus some who were attending only part of the week. Registrations are still coming in. We expect about 215 at the ball.

2010 Summer School

Teachers and musicians are being selected. We hope to hold the cost of the candidate course to the same as it was in 2008. That will mean we'll find a few ingenious ways to save a little bit here and there and then absorb the rest.

2011 Summer School

We are looking for a new location for this Summer School. At the moment our attention is focused on a promising location in the east. However, we still have a tentative booking at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University just in case no other site looks as good.

Membership

Membership for the year is 678.

TACBooks

Sales for April and May were slightly higher than for the same period last year. 200 more copies of TACNotes have been printed.

TACSound

The latest catalogue is now available on the web and a printed version has been printed to be mailed out with the June issue of TACTalk.

News Flash

This summer at both the AGM and Summer School you'll be able to make purchases from both TACBooks and TACSound by Visa or debit card. (Wow! We are beginning to get all the bells and whistles!)

TACWeb

The plan to redesign our website is still ongoing and will be resumed in September in earnest.

That's all for now.

Bob Anglin
Area Reps Coordinator