The related discussion of duties of the position led to the following motion:

KU reported as liaison to ATHE. She discussed the results of an ATHE survey which seemed to show that 90% of ATHE’s membership is engaged in teaching the practice rather than the theory of Theatre.

JM reported on his progress in producing a searchable online version of the VASTA Bibliography. He has won a grant from ATHE to continue with the project.

GK agreed to take over the reins of the mentorship program from DB as she is leaving the board.

KR presented the most recent version of VASTA’s Promotion and Tenure Guidelines. The revision process is ongoing.

KD reported on a VASTA meeting held at the Voice Symposium. This led to a discussion of the need for a brochure of some sort to distribute to potential members. Finally a decision was taken to design a bookmark for this purpose.

KB reported on her attendance at KC/ACTF in Washington DC where VASTA presented an award to J Salome Martinez.

The board then turned to the topic of certification as a potential aspect of VASTA membership. Arguments were made on both sides. No action was resolved upon.

The meeting adjourned for the length of the conference and was rejoined on the evening of July 31.

The first action of the board in this meeting was to choose LW as VASTA’s new President-Elect.

CM gave a brief report on the newsletter.

EA reported that he was required to purchase an insurance policy covering VASTA for accidents which might take place at conferences. SDSU, as our host, required this insurance.

JR MOVED ADJOURNMENT. MJ SECONDED THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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IFTR’s 14th World Congress
By Sandra Lindberg

This July, I participated in the International Federation for Theatre Research’s (IFTR) 14th World Congress, held in Amsterdam. Its theme was “Theatre and Cultural Memory: the Event Between Past and Future.” Thanks to mentoring from the Voice and Speech Review (VSR), I had a strong draft to submit to this conference. My paper “Archetypal Image Work in Shakespearean Performance Training,” currently under review with VSR, was selected for presentation at this conference and I was invited to participate in a Working Group titled Theory and Practice of Performing. Though IFTR has been meeting since 1956, only recently has it begun to incorporate the research of voice, movement, and acting practitioners. Voice teachers are especially under-represented at this conference, which is why I am hoping to spark more interest in IFTR with the information below.

According to IFTR’s website (www.iftr-iftr.org/iftr), its conference is one of the “world’s largest and most significant in the discipline of theatre/performance studies.” Its aim is to “promote collaboration and exchange of information between individuals and organizations concerned with theatre research.”

IFTR believes that Working Groups, loose associations of theatre practitioners with similar performance/research interests, are at the heart of its mission. There are 15 such groups at IFTR. The WG: Theory and Practice of Performing is only three years old. I felt privileged to be part of a vigorous group from France, Australia, Japan, Britain, Venezuela, and the United States which is gently nudging IFTR to include the research of those of us who actually practice our craft.

Our Working Group met for a total of nine hours. Over a three day period, we led each other through exercises and discussion, a far different experience from most conferences where I have spent most of my time stuck in a chair. We found that many of our papers explored how theatre training relates to the awakening and shaping of energy/spirit. When I chose exercises for this group, I focused on the connections between breath, sounding, image, and will. Other practitioners in the group explored Qi Gong, image exercises connected to Chakras, the relationship between image and text in Hamlet, or the relationship between physical centers and character. We worked to find both common threads and uniquely different characteristics of our work.

The next IFTR/FIRT Conference will be held in January 2003, in Jaipur, India. Its theme is “Ethnicity and Identity: Global Performance.” The convener for WG: Theory and Practice of Performing will be Diana Smith-Sadak at Towson University. Check the IFTR website (www.iftr-iftr.org/iftr) for information about submitting a paper and/or participating in this working group. Also, keep IFTR in mind for 2004, when it will be held in St. Petersburg, Russia. Jade McCutcheon, of Australia, and I will be the 2004 conveners for this Working Group. Information about the Russian conference will appear on the IFTR website in a few months.

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The Challenge of the “Mixed Bag” Class
A report from VASTA Discussion Group:
By Mandy Rees and Christine Morris

A number of VASTA members, teaching in undergraduate programs, are faced with serving the needs of a...
Over the course of the three-day conference, all three presenters offered systems that explored the connection between breath and movement. Susanna Bloch’s Alba Emoting™ work uses breathing patterns and physical actions to express and invoke specific emotional states. Bloch also uses breath and physicality to release those emotions when appropriate. Diane Elliot’s Body-Mind Centering® presentations featured partner and individual work exploring the sense of respiration deep within the body. Bill Helm’s Qi Gong classes used animal imagery and movement to facilitate each participant’s experience with their own breath and energy.

In past conferences, participants spent three full days attending workshops. This year’s schedule included time off. Eight blocks of teaching time were offered, but each participant was scheduled for only six of these periods. In this way, attendees had the opportunity to rest, nap, swim, chat, or even visit the aviary at the San Diego Zoo.

Tuesday evening’s doctors panel featured Yolanda Heman-Ackah, MD, Assistant Professor, Laryngologist and Voice Specialist, The Voice Center, UIC College of Medicine, and Andrew L. Ries, MD, MPH, Professor of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, University of California, San Diego. Dr. Heman-Ackah detailed the human voice mechanism and the principles of sound production. Her favorite teaching tools were homemade toys, one of which looked suspiciously like a turkey baster. Dr. Ries documented the dangers of smoking and the problems of asthma, admonishing asthma sufferers to engage in a consistent self-monitoring program guided by a physician. His favorite teaching tools were cartoons, both in color and black-and-white.

The conference also featured “Things that Work” break-out discussion sessions, a “Bistro” open-mic night, and a theatre outing to the Old Globe. Newly published work by editors Janet Rodgers (“The Complete Voice and Speech Workout Book and CD”) and Ruth Rootberg (“Breathing: Results of a Survey”) were unveiled. Congratulations to Clyde Vinson Memorial Scholarship winner Gregory Lush, and a special thanks to conference attendees who contributed over $400 to the Vinson fund.

A deep bow to Director of Conferences Eric (cafeteria-negotiator) Armstrong and his Assistant Directors Jeff (map-master) Morrison and Judy lee (refund-wrangler) Vivier. See y’all in New York in 2003!

“mixed bag” of students gathered together in a single class. This may mean a collection of majors and non-majors, experienced and “green” students, those hoping for a life in the arts and those aiming for business, teaching, or other professional careers. We may face students who are unprepared, who are left-brained, result oriented, and not in their bodies. We may work with students who do not come to us with discipline, motivation, or a willingness to commit to all exercises. Many of these students spend more time interacting with a computer screen than time using their voices and bodies for communication. What we have to offer is important to them, but we have to develop fresh approaches and techniques that can effectively reach and inspire a wide variety of needs. And to complicate matters, a one semester voice class may be all we have available to us.

Two key questions arose in our discussion. The first is, “What do we want these students to learn in one term?” We were only able to begin this important conversation; however, we identified a few ideas we thought were appropriate.

- an awareness of their breath, voice, and body
- learning to trust the process of producing sound rather than listening to the sound they hear
- experimenting with their voices in a playful manner
- learning to communicate without worrying about how they sound
- spend more time on voice work rather than speech work

The second question we need to address is, “What situation gives us the best chance of student success?” Again, we were only able to scratch the surface.

- a classroom where students have permission to fail and look foolish; provide a safety net
- frequent emphasis on ways vocal skills can be applied to many fields
- celebrate the learning process over the result
- maintain integrity and stick to our goals, not compromise our standards based on student expectations
- using children’s stories or ghost stories to encourage animated vocal and physical expression

We found sharing our ideas, success stories, challenges and questions to be a wonderfully supportive process, and one we hope to continue.

Not listed in the Professional Index? Entry out of date? You may be making yourself hard to find--missing valuable professional opportunities! Go to: http://www.vasta.org/dir/