Greetings from the Chair of the IADMS Education Committee

In following an exceptionally imaginative and hard-working leader, Rachel Rist, as Chair of the Education Committee, I have inherited a lively, creative committee and a cauldron of initiatives designed to bring dance science to all those who teach and care for dancers. One of Rachel’s salient successes is, of course, the IADMS Bulletin for Teachers, edited with extraordinary skill by Gayanne Grossman and Marliese Kimmerle. I am sure you will agree that this achievement alone would be ample evidence of Rachel’s contribution over the last four years.

By now, many of you will have enjoyed the Day for Teachers in Birmingham, UK. While Donna Krasnow, Chair of the Day for Teachers program sub-committee, is commenting on the event in this issue, I wish to congratulate Donna for a beautifully planned sequence of presentations, engaging speakers and topics that affect us all in our teaching lives. I happen to know that the tireless Donna has our 2011 program well under way, so make your plans to come to Washington, DC, USA, to take part in this most enjoyable professional development opportunity.

In Birmingham we released our new set of posters for 2011. A constant stream of teachers greeted us, trying to choose which of the total of six full-color posters would be most useful in their studios. Finally, many people found the choice too hard and bought the full set of six. With their excellent design and witty, expressive images by New York-based dance photographer Jake Pett, these striking posters bring style and information to any studio or clinic. Each poster is based on an IADMS resource paper (under Resources/Resource Papers on the IADMS website), allowing teachers to gain a greater understanding of each topic. The “Somatics” poster explains how dancers can use imagery and attention, or “mindfulness,” to improve their performance, even when injured. The “High Performance Fuel” poster can be the dance teacher’s secret weapon in encouraging students to consider the vital relationship between nutrition and performance. The “First Aid for Dancers” poster is another indispensable asset, giving easy-to-follow emergency information on dealing with injuries as well as advice on ensuring a safe return to dancing. Of course, you can still purchase “Starting Pointe Work,” “Proprioception” and “Adolescent Growth Spurt.” All posters are available through our website. They can be purchased separately or as part of your enrolment in the Studio Teachers’ Network (STN).

Education Committee members recognize from personal experience that dance teaching can be a lonely business, and sharing our problems with our “significant others” at home over dinner does not necessarily answer our questions on technique, physiques, flexibility, injuries, growth spurts, etc. The STN has been formed to enable teachers to communicate with others with similar interests and, inevitably, with similar problems. If you plan to travel, you may also want to contact teachers in the areas you will visit. As the STN is a new venture, we will soon be surveying those enrolled to find out how we can meet their needs. To enroll in the STN and receive other benefits such as discounts and email news, simply purchase the three 2011 posters and send your details for listing in our online directory (Resources/Studio Teachers’ Network).

The Education Committee is also busy supporting the new IADMS/Trinity College London Certificate in Safe and Effective Dance Practice. This qualification is rapidly becoming acknowledged internationally for its comprehensive, scientifically sound content, for its applicability to the teaching situation and for the user-friendly format in which it is delivered. The qualification assures parents and students that you are complying with international “best practice.”

As you can see, Rachel’s example of energetic innovation is both inspiring and challenging. I look forward to both aspects, and to serving you all as you “plant seeds of knowledge that last forever.”

Janet Karin
Chair, IADMS Education Committee
Report on A Day for Teachers 2010

The theme for the 2010 Teachers Day was “Safe and Effective Dance Practice.” The material presented was useful to teachers of a variety of dance forms and age groups, and also had application to the IADMS/Trinity College London certification/qualification in Safe and Effective Dance Practice. Donna Krasnow opened the day with an overview of anatomy and alignment from the dance teacher’s perspective, covering some of the common muscle imbalances and alignment faults seen in dancers. Rachel Rist followed with a discussion of sequencing the dance class, looking at some of the factors that determine when and how material should be introduced to dancers, and how dance classes might be organized in terms of healthy development of the dancer. Emma Redding covered a range of topics from injury prevention and management, to training approaches that minimize overuse injuries, to first aid, to some of the latest rehabilitation approaches. Ginny Wilmerding examined healthy environments, describing room factors such as floor surfaces, temperature, and ceiling heights, as well as promoting good hydration and nutrition for dancers. Jan Dunn gave an experiential session combining imagery and movement, with a focus on the feet and the spine. The last session led by Maggie Morris and Sonia Rafferty was a discussion of IADMS/Trinity College London certification/qualification in Safe and Effective Dance Practice, with a focus on information for potential course providers. The day ended with a panel of all the presenters fielding questions from the attendees. “A Day for Teachers” in Washington, DC, USA, in 2011 will examine supplementary training - fitness for the dancing body. Please join us for another exciting and informative day of presentations and movement sessions for teachers!

Donna Krasnow
Program Planning Committee