

ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC AND CRITICAL THINKING (AILACT) *NEWSLETTER* April 2007

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From the Editor The first item of news concerns the AILACT officers who have recently been appointed by our president, Maurice Finocchiaro, with the agreement of the AILACT Board. The following people have been appointed to the following AILACT offices for the terms indicated:

Dan Boone, Indiana University of Pennsylvania: (danboone@iup.edu) Program Chair for the APA Eastern Division, reappointment for one year (2007);

Kevin Possin, Winona State University, Minnesota: (kpossin@winona.edu) Program Chair for the APA Central Division, three years (Spring 2007-Spring 2010);

Wanda Teays, Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles: (goddendm@uwindsor.ca) Program Chair for the APA Pacific Division, three years (Spring 2007-Spring 2010);

David Godden, University of Windsor: ()Webmaster, three years (Spring 2007-Spring 2010).

I am pleased to report that there is a thriving argumentation community in Norway, located primarily at the University of Bergen. Yours truly together with three other persons familiar to most of us, Douglas Walton and David Hitchcock from Canada Bart Berheij from The Netherlands, and Christian Kock from Denmark were the international keynote speakers at a symposium, Argumentation in (Con)text, sponsored by the University of Bergen from January 4 to January 6, 2007. Prof. Sigmund Ongstad of Oslo University was also a keynote speaker, and eight persons from several Norwegian university universities made presentations. Speakers represented both philosophical and rhetorical approaches to argumentation. The organizers of the symposium have been involved in developing a course to develop argumentation academic writing. Officials at the University of Bergen have high regard for the course, awarding it a prize, which was used to finance the symposium. The hope is to hold an argumentation symposium every two years.

As I write, the Pacific Division meetings have just concluded. Besides a group session, the meetings included an Author-Meets-Critics session devoted to yours truly's *Acceptable Premises: An Epistemic Approach to an Informal Logic Problem* included on the main program. My critics were Richard Feldman, Hans Hansen, and Mark Weinstein, and the meetin was

chaired by Maurice Finocchiaro. Although there were only two persons in the audience, the participants felt we had a good session and a good interchange. Perhaps most importantly, by being on the main program, the session called the attention of the general philosophical community to the subject of informal logic.

In this issue, you will find information about the Spring 2007 AILACT elections, some further details that have developed since the December Newsletter about upcoming meetings during 2007 to be held in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association Divisional Meetings, and about the 2007 Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation Conference. We are also repeating information about the 2007 AILACT Essay Prize contest and, as will be our standard practice, we include the AILACT Membership Form. The form may serve as a reminder to those who have not yet paid their dues for the year. We also encourage members to share the form with others who may be interested in the work of AILACT.

Both of the new program chairs have asked me for suggestions for AILACT sessions and activities at APA meetings. One of the most important things I think we can do for informal logic/critical thinking/argumentation theory/philosophy of argument right now is to make people in the profession of philosophy aware that there are philosophically interesting and philosophically significant issues in the field for exploration. One way to achieve this, I believe, is to show how work done in mainstream philosophy has a bearing on theoretical issues in argumentation theory. Can you think of some philosopher's work or of some body of work within mainstream philosophy which has a bearing on argumentation theory? I can think immediately of Alvin Goldman, and also of Alvin Plantinga and William Alston among contemporary philosophers, and Thomas Reid as an historical figure. An AILACT session devoted to the implications of a particular philosopher's work for informal logic/critical thinking/argumentation theory with either a reply by the philosopher himself or, in the case of Reid, a scholar of that figure, could be a way of letting the philosophy mainstream know of the interest and importance of our area.

I hope you find some of this information useful and of interest. Should any of you have notices or other information you would like included in future issues, please e-mail me at jfreeman@hunter.cuny.edu. Issues should be published close to April 1, August 1, and December 1 each year.

James B. Freeman

Elections

In accordance with the AILACT constitution, in Spring 2007 there will be elections for the offices of president, vice president, treasurer, and seven members of the board of directors. A nominating committee has been appointed, consisting of Bob Ennis, Chair (rhennis@uiuc.edu), Trudy Govier (trudy.govier@uleth.ca), and Jonathan Adler (jadler@brooklyn.cuny.edu). As announced by the chair in March, the committee has prepared a slate:

For President: Derek Allen

For Vice-President: Leo Groarke

For Treasurer: Donald Hatcher

For Board of Directors:

Peter Asquith

J. Anthony Blair

John Hoaglund

Trudy Govier

Daniel Boone
James Freeman
David Hitchcock

Michael Scriven
Tom Solon
Dale Turner

Members of AILACT may make additional nominations by sending names to the chair, Bob Ennis, together with a statement of agreement by the nominee, by May 3. Members will receive a ballot shortly thereafter via surface mail. Members may cast votes either by returning the ballot via surface mail, sending their votes electronically, or attending the general meeting of AILACT for the purpose of finishing counting the votes and completing the election process, in accordance with the constitution. The meeting will be held at the University of Windsor, in conjunction with the OSSA conference, on Thursday, June 7, during the lunch hour. More details will be distributed with the conference material. Besides guiding the course of the organization over the next two years, those elected will take a principal role in framing AILACT's stance in the current debate over required critical thinking assessment.

Upcoming Meetings 2007

Group Sessions at the Central Division American Philosophical Association Meetings, April 18-21, 2007, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL

AILACT Co-Sponsored Session with APA Committee on Teaching

Date and time of session: Thursday, April 19, 2007 1:30-4:30 pm

Chair: David Hunter, Ryerson University

Speakers: Robert H. Ennis, Emeritus, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, "A Required National Test of Thinking for College Students in the U.S.A. Whose Institutions Receive Federal Money?"

Leo Groarke, Wilfrid Laurier University, "Thinking Critically About Critical Thinking Teaching"

Don Hatcher, Baker University, "Comparing Standardized Critical Thinking Tests"

Discussant: Steven Norris, University of Alberta

AILACT Session:

Date and time of session: Thursday, April 19, 2007 5:15-7:15 pm

Chair: Peter D. Asquith, Michigan State University

Speaker: Daniel Cohen, Colby College, "Virtue Epistemology and Critical Inquiry: Open-Mindedness and a Sense of Proportion as Critical Virtues"

Commentator: Jay Wood, Wheaton College

Speaker: Patrick Riesterer, McMaster University, "Pragma-Dialectics: A Critique"

Commentator: George Bodger, Canisius College

Call for Papers for AILACT Group Session at the APA Pacific Division, American Philosophical Association, Spring, 2008 (Location and dates TBA).

We welcome papers on any topic in informal logic, critical thinking, or argumentation, including papers on teaching, research, or applications. Papers should be no longer than 12 pages or a 30-minute reading time. We also seek commentators and/or possible panelists around a central topic.

Deadline for submissions is September 19, and notification is by October 17, 2007.
Commentators or panelists should indicate their interest by September 19 .
Send submissions as attachments in MS Word or a pdf file to wteays@msmc.la.edu.
Or mail to: Wanda Teays, Chair, Philosophy Department, Mount St. Mary's College, 12001
Chalon Rd., Los Angeles, CA, 90049. Any questions, call: 310/954-4290.

**Preliminary Call for Papers and Ideas for AILACT Sessions at APA Central Division
Group Meetings, April 2008**

Please begin thinking about any topics for papers, debates, and panel discussions you would like to see on the 2008 program, concerning informal logic, critical thinking, and argumentation, their natures, their instruction, and their relations with other disciplines. Ideas regarding joint sessions with other groups meeting at the APA are always welcome too. The formal Call for Papers and Suggestions will be posted in the next AILACT Newsletter, along with submission deadlines and instructions. But it's never too early to entertain some possibilities. Feel free to share them with the new Central Division Program Chair, Kevin Possin, Winona State University:
kpossin@winona.edu.

2007 AILACT Essay Prize Announcement

AILACT

Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking

AILACT ESSAY PRIZE 2007

The **Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking** invites applications for its fourth annual **AILACT Essay Prize**.

The value of the AILACT Essay Prize is US\$500. The prize may, in extraordinary circumstances, be divided among entries judged to be of about equal merit. Additionally, AILACT intends to publish this winning essay in one of a continuing series of volumes containing the winning essays as well as some of the best essays from various years.

Essays related to the teaching or theory of informal logic or critical thinking will be considered for the prize. An essay may be unpublished, forthcoming or previously published. There are no restrictions on authorship. Published papers must have appeared on or after 1 January 2007. Essays should be in the neighborhood of 3500-6000 words.

The essays will be assessed on the basis of, in no particular order: their originality, their scholarship, if applicable (papers that ignore the relevant literature will tend to go to the bottom of the pile), their argument (needless to say?), their style (lucid, delightful-to-read papers will tend to rise to the top), and their importance to the field (measured by how high they register on the "Everyone should read this paper-and soon!" scale).

The jury members for the 2007 AILACT Essay Prize, approved by the AILACT Board of Directors, are Michael Scriven (chair), David Hitchcock, and Harvey Siegel. The verdict of the jury is final.

To submit a paper, attach an electronic file to an e-mail with AILACT ESSAY ENTRY on the "Subject" line, and send it to the chair at edgepress@aol.com. Please send the paper ready for blind-reviewing (the author not identified on the paper or file containing the paper, and self-identifying references removed from the text, notes and References). Be sure to include your name and a mailing address in your covering note.

The deadline for receipt of papers to be considered for the 2007 AILACT Essay Prize is 1 September 2007. The winner will be announced by 1 December 2007. AILACT will publicize the name of the winner.

For information about AILACT, see our Web site: <http://ailact.mcmaster.ca/>

**2007 Meeting of the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation, June 6-9, 2007,
University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario CA Announcement:**

**DISSENSUS
&
THE SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND**

A conference presented by the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation

*June 6 - 9, 2007
University of Windsor*

Keynote addresses to be given by

MICHAEL GILBERT

Philosophy, York University

DALE HAMPLE

Communication, Western Illinois University

CHRISTIAN KOCK

Rhetoric, University of Copenhagen

Organizing Committee:

Hans V. Hansen

Christopher W. Tindale

J. Anthony Blair

Ralph H. Johnson

www.uwindsor.ca/ossa

Membership Form The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking

The Association (AILACT) was formed in 1983 to promote research, teaching, and testing of informal logic and critical thinking at all levels; to increase the extent and quality of such research, teaching, and testing; and to facilitate discussion among its members. AILACT sponsors sessions at each APA divisional meeting and other meetings; has a Web site, <http://ailact.mcmaster.ca>, that provides a wide variety of information about AILACT, informal logic, and critical thinking, and posts papers and other members' materials; has an e-mail discussion list* for discussion of topics of interest to members; and offers an annual Essay Prize for the recent essay judged best in the field.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FOR 2007

I would like to become a member of AILACT (US\$10 -- or the equivalent*)

I would like to renew my membership (US\$10 -- or the equivalent**)

(Make checks payable to AILACT)

Name: _____

Institutional affiliation (if any): _____

Date: _____

Please fill in the following:

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ (Very important! Much of our business will be conducted primarily electronically -- but you will not be disenfranchised if you do not have an e-mail address.)

What would you like to see AILACT do, or do better?:

Mail with check to: Donald Hatcher, AILACT Treasurer, Center for Critical Thinking, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS 66006 USA Email: <donald.hatcher@bakeru.edu>

*a check in the currency of the member, if the member so chooses