ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC AND CRITICAL THINKING (AILACT)
NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 2013

Contents

From the Editor

Improvements to the AILACT website (available here http://ailact.wordpress.com) continue. The member area is now active. Details on this exciting new resource are available in the note from the President below.

Calls for papers for the AILACT sessions of all three APA meetings are included in section 4. Details of each program together with the exact date and time of the sessions will appear in the December newsletter. Also the deadline for ISSA 2014 abstracts is fast approaching. Details can be found here: http://cf.hum.uva.nl/issa/.

The notice for the 2013 AILACT Essay Prize is included section 5. For those who are planning to submit an essay, or seriously considering doing so, please note that the due date is October 31, 2013. Details of the competition and instructions for submission are all included in the notice.

Also included is round three of an experiment to see how well the purveyors of logic and critical thinking do on a brief quiz. Results from the second round are available.

A Membership Form is available at the end of this newsletter. A pdf version, which can be completed on-screen, is available here http://ailact.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/ailact-membership-form.pdf. Dues, which continue to be $10, may be paid by check or credit card or PayPal; the form should be completed and sent (with a check if applicable) to our treasurer, Don Hatcher.

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From the President

Appointments: The Board of Directors has appointed Kevin Possin as AILACT Program Chair for the APA Central Division for a third consecutive three-year term (2014 to 2016) and Peter Tan as AILACT Program Chair for the APA Pacific Division, also for a three-year term.

Recognition of service: Peter succeeds Wanda Teays, who has served as AILACT's Program Chair for the APA Pacific Division for two consecutive three-year terms. She has been an energetic, conscientious, and highly effective chair, and on behalf of the membership I would like to thank her warmly.

In an email sent to the membership on July 3 on behalf of AILACT's Nominating Committee, Dale Turner reported that Bob Ennis has decided for personal reasons not to stand for re-election to the Board. A member of the Board since 2009, Bob was President of AILACT from 2001 to 2005 and Director of Special Projects from 2007 to 2011. In the December 2011 edition of this newsletter, I noted that as Director of Special Projects he was the main force behind AILACT's response to the Spellings Commission recommendation for the "transparent nationwide [U.S.A.] testing for critical thinking in higher education" (2007). In addition, he produced a list of advanced degree programs in critical thinking and argumentation for posting on our website, recruited 21 members of AILACT to serve as consultants on informal logic and critical thinking, and maintained the AILACT-D List. He deserves our gratitude for his sustained and exemplary service to our Association.

Election: As members know, a Board of Directors election will be held (by email ballot) over a two-week period from Monday, August 19 to Sunday, September 1. Dale Turner has sent the membership an election mailing via the D List; it includes information about the voting procedure, a ballot, and bios for all but one of the nominees. I thank Dale and his colleagues on the Nominating Committee (David Godden, Tom Fischer) for their work and I urge every member of AILACT who is eligible to vote (there are 145 of us) to do so.

Member Area Website: We have recently launched a password-protected website for our members, a project that has been in the works for several years.

One of the purposes of the site is to provide a list, and profiles, of members of AILACT for the information of the membership.

A second purpose is to facilitate online discussion among AILACT members with shared research interests in informal logic/critical thinking/argumentation theory; to this end, the Member Area includes an expandable list of research areas in these domains with, in each case, links to the names and profiles of members with a research interest in the area concerned and a link to a page with a posting box.

A third purpose is to provide a voting function for polls/elections.

Access to the site is restricted to members of AILACT who register on it and whose registration is validated. I am doing the validation, but I will be away until the third week of August. When I return, I will circulate registration information via the D List. I strongly encourage all members of AILACT to register; it takes only a few minutes.

With best wishes,
Derek Allen

A Very Short Reasoning Quiz

From April: While the planet Loki is Earth-shaped and has an Earth-normal gravity and atmosphere, it has no stable magnetic pole (which rarely matches with the geographic north pole anyway) and is subject to violent electrical storms that wreak havoc on navigation systems, as the first Terran Planetary Survery mission to Loki discovered. Prior to the dispatch of a rescue team, the last transmission from the Survey mission was as follows: *Most of supplies lost in earthquake—current location unknown. Yesterday went ten kilometers due south, ten kilometers due east, and ten kilometers due north and arrived right back at starting point, but location still unknown. Send help.*

Assuming all the statements made in the transmission are true, is it possible to determine, with an accuracy of within a ten-mile radius, where to look for the Survey team?

Solution: I received five responses to this puzzle. Two just answered, "The North Pole", which I will take as implying that it is possible to determine the location. One said "yes, it is possible". One said it is possible given certain assumptions about the rate of movement of magnetic north. The last one provided two strategies for determining the location, but did not say one way or the other whether it was possible to determine the location of the survey team.

The correct answer is "No". Assume for the moment that geographic north and magnetic north are the same. In this situation, one point that satisfies the travel claims they made would indeed be the North Pole. (But if this were the only such point, why would the survey team also say that their location was still unknown?) There are also an infinite number of points in the southern hemisphere that satisfy the specified travel claims. Somewhere in the southern hemisphere is a longitudinal circumference such that if you were to walk due east (or west) around this circumference for ten kilometers you would end up back exactly where you started. Call this circle A. Ten kilometers to the north of A is another longitudinal circumference, call it B. Starting at any point on B, if one travels south ten kilometers one reaches a point on A. Traveling due east will cover A once and arrive back at the starting point on A. Traveling due north for ten kilometers will retrace the original descent from B with the end point being the original starting point on B. Since any point on B will satisfy the travel directions given by the survey team, there are an infinite number of points fairly close to the South Pole that satisfy the travel conditions. (There are actually more than just those on B, but I leave determining those as an exercise for the reader.) Since the points in the southern hemisphere are more than twenty miles away from the North Pole, it is not possible to determine the team's location within a ten mile radius. If geographic north and magnetic north do not match up, then the number of possible satisfiers of their direction claims only increases. But since it is not possible in the

simplest case, it is not possible in more complicated cases. Hence, it is not possible to determine their location.

[So what to make of the Earth-bound version—You travel ten km south, ten km east, ten km north and arrive right back at your starting point at which time you see a bear. What color is the bear? The correct answer is 'white', but not because the North Pole is the only point that satisfies the travel described and polar bears are white. The correct reasoning is as follows. Since there are no bears in Antarctica, if you see a bear after traveling those directions, you must be at the North Pole, in which case the bear was white. (I guess we ignore the fact that the normal range for polar bears does not come within ten km of the North Pole.)]

New Puzzle: Seeress of Katmandu

The seeress of Katmandu lives in a temple deep in the Himalayas. If found, she will answer three 'yes' or 'no' questions from supplicants. On Mondays she knows what is true and what is false and tells the truth. On Tuesdays she knows what is true and what is false, but lies. On Wednesday she takes everything that is true to be false and everything false to be true, but tells the truth as she sees it. On Thursdays she takes everything that is true to be false and everything that is false to be true, but lies as she sees it. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, she meditates and never says a word.

One day, in the middle of the day, a supplicant arrives at the hidden temple. Unfortunately, given the long climb and severe storms, the supplicant has lost track of what day it is. Not to be thwarted, the supplicant first asks: "Is today Wednesday?" and receives an answer. Unfortunately, given the answer, the supplicant cannot determine what day it is. Next the supplicant asks: "Do you believe today is Wednesday?" and receives an answer. Now the supplicant knows what day it is and goes on to ask the question to which she really wants the answer.

What day was it?

Answers (or guesses), along with any justification you care to offer, should be sent to Geoff Goddu at ggoddu@richmond.edu by September 25th, 2013.

AILACT @ APA Call for Submissions

1) Call for Papers and Panel Discussions for the AILACT Group Session at the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting, December 27 through 30, 2013, at the Marriott Baltimore Waterfront, Baltimore, MD.

Papers and abstracts on any topic relating to concerns of informal logic and critical thinking -- inclusive of theoretical and applied themes as well as concerns about teaching -- can be sent to the Program Director, George Boger, Boger@canisius.edu for review. The deadline for receipt of papers and abstracts is November 1, 2013.

2) Call for Papers and Panel Discussions for the AILACT Group Session at the American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting, February 26 through March 1, 2014, at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel, Chicago, IL.

Please send your suggestions on any topic in informal logic, critical thinking, or argumentation, its instruction, assessment, or application to various disciplines and world events. Ideas regarding a guest speaker, author-meets-critics, or a joint session with another Group Meeting are very welcome. Please also forward this invitation to anyone else you think might be interested in submitting or attending.

Deadlines: Papers and [confirmed] speaker lists should be submitted by September 30, 2013. Send papers as attachments in pdf or MS Word. Send all emails and submissions to the Program Director, Kevin Possin, kpossin@winona.edu.

3) Call for Papers and Panel Discussions for the AILACT Group Session at the American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, April 16-20, Westin Hotel, San Diego, CA.

The new West Coast Program Chair for AILACT is Peter Tan, Philosophy Department, Mount St. Mary's College, ptan@msmc.la.edu. Please email Peter no later than September 30, 2012, with a 250 word abstract or a panel topic (brief summary is fine) on any of the following topic areas: Critical Writing as Critical Thinking, Teaching Argumentation, and Critical Thinking and Inductive Reasoning.

Please note: If you have another topic, send it along for consideration.

THE RECENT PAST: Our last session at the 2013 APA was excellent. The focus was Teaching Critical Thinking to Diverse Populations. Speakers included Drs. James Davis, Musho Kwon, Jana Mohr-Lone, and Peter Tan, with Session Chair Wanda Teays.

2013 AILACT Essay Prize Call for Submissions

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) invites submissions for the 2013 AILACT Essay Prize. This will be the ninth year in which the prize has been offered.

- Value: $300 U.S.

- The prize-winning paper, and any "honourable mention" paper, will be considered for publication in *Informal Logic* upon the conditions listed below.*

- Papers related to the teaching or theory of informal logic or critical thinking, and papers on argumentation theory, will be considered for the prize.

- There are no restrictions on authorship. Authors need not be members of AILACT.

- Previously unpublished papers, and papers published or accepted for publication between January 1, 2010 and October 31, 2013 are eligible. Maximum length: 6,000 words.

- Entries will be assessed on the basis of their argument, scholarship, style, and importance to the field.

- The jury members for the 2013 AILACT essay prize, approved by the AILACT Board of Directors, are Alec Fisher (Department of Philosophy, University of East Anglia), Trudy Govier (Department of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge), and Larry Wright (Department of Philosophy, University of California, Riverside). The decision of the jury is final.

- To submit a paper, attach a PDF (preferred) or MS Word or RTF document to an email with AILACT ESSAY ENTRY on the "subject" line and send it to Derek Allen (derekallen@trinity.utoronto.ca) with a covering note giving your name and a mailing address. Please send the paper ready for blind-reviewing (the author not identified on the paper or file containing the paper, or in the description of the document's properties that is part of the file, and self-identifying references removed from the text, notes, and references).

- There is a limit of one entry per author.

- The deadline for receipt of submissions is October 31, 2013. The winner will be announced by January 15, 2014. AILACT will publicize the name of the winner on its website and at AILACT sessions held at APA divisional meetings in 2014.

- For further information about the essay prize, please contact Ben Hamby (hambyb@mcmaster.ca). For information about AILACT, visit our web site: http://ailact.wordpress.com/.

*The prize-winning paper, and any "honourable mention" paper, will be eligible for consideration for publication in *Informal Logic* if it has not already been published or accepted or committed for publication elsewhere and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, and if the author consents to its consideration for publication in *Informal Logic*. The editors of *Informal Logic* will arrange for blind review of the paper if these conditions are met. The author will be expected to revise the paper in light of the reviewers' suggestions, or to justify not doing so.

Membership Form
The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking

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The Association (AILACT) was formed in 1983 to promote research on, and 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 Website, http://ailact.wordpress.com/ 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 holds an annual essay prize competition.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FOR 2013

___ I would like to become a member of AILACT (US $10 or equivalent)

___ I would like to renew my membership (US $10 or equivalent)

___I am a student and would like to become a member of AILACT (Fees waived)

Date: _____

Name:_____

Address: _____

 _____

_____

Institutional affiliation (if any): _____

Phone:_____

Email:_____ **(Please print clearly. Much of our business is conducted electronically. However, you will not be disenfranchised if you do not have an e-mail address.)**

Payment Options: **Check:** Make checks (US or Canadian only) payable to AILACT

Credit Card Payment: Please deduct US $10 from

Credit Card**:** __Visa __MasterCard

Account Number: _____ _____ _____ _____

Expiration Date: _____

PayPal: log in to your account and send the payment to Don Hatcher's email address (dhatcher@bakeru.edu). PayPal will indicate that your payment is to AILACT.

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

<u>**Mail to:**</u> Donald Hatcher, AILACT Treasurer, Department of Philosophy, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS 66006 USA. Email: <dhatcher@bakeru.edu>