

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

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**From the Editor**

The 2013 AILACT Essay Prize submissions are in and the judges are deliberating. There were 13 submissions this year—a significant increase from last year. Results should be known by January 15<sup>th</sup> and will also be announced in the next newsletter. The programs for each of the AILACT sessions of the APA meetings are now available—see section 3 of the newsletter for full details.

Also included is round four of an experiment to see how well the purveyors of logic and critical thinking do on a brief quiz. Results from the third 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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University of Richmond  
[ggoddu@richmond.edu](mailto:ggoddu@richmond.edu)

**From the President**

Greetings for my first time as president of AILACT. First, I want to thank our immediate past president, Derek Allen, for the exemplary job he did as president for three terms. He has left” big shoes” to fill and I hope I can approach doing as good a job as he did. I am encouraged by

reading posts on the AILACT discussion list. Members of AILACT have some very interesting ideas for the future of the organization, including a possible re-naming. I hope to begin facilitating exploring some of these ideas by the Board and the membership before the April Newsletter appears. Best wishes for the holiday season.

James Freeman

### **Upcoming Meetings 2013-2014**

*(1) AILACT Session at 2013 Eastern Division APA Meeting—AILACT session cancelled*

*(2) AILACT Session at the 2014 Central Division APA Meeting, February 26-March 1, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL*

**Friday, February 28, 7:00-10:00 p.m.**

Topic: Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum--If So, How?

Chair: Weston Jorde (Dakota County Technical College)

Speakers:

Donald Hatcher (Baker University)

"Is Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum a Plausible Goal?"

Linda S. Behar-Horenstein (University of Florida)

"Teaching and Researching the Development of CT Skills: An Imperative for Professional Colleges"

Paul Green (Mount St. Mary's College)

"CT Pedagogy as a Problem of Far Transfer"

Commentator:

Frank Fair (Sam Houston State University)

*(3) AILACT session at the 2014 APA Pacific Division meeting, April 16 - 20, 2014, Westin Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego*

Wednesday, April 16, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Speaker:

Zenon Culverhouse (Stanford University)

"Critical Thinking the Age of MOOCs"

Commentator: Wanda Teays (Mount St. Mary's College)

## A Very Short Reasoning Quiz

From August: 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?*

Solution: I received five responses to this puzzle, though three were from the same individual, who gave me two justifications for Tuesday, before settling on a final answer of Monday. The other two responses argued for Tuesday and Thursday respectively.

The correct answer is Monday. Given the conditions on the seeress the net result is that on Mondays she utters just truths, on Tuesdays just falsehoods, on Wednesdays just falsehoods (flips true and false and then tells truth as she sees it), and on Thursdays just truths (flips true and false and then tells falsehoods as she sees it). Hence, if we can determine what is actually the case in a given situation we can determine how she will respond.

On Monday it is not Wednesday and she utters truths, so she will respond 'No.' On Tuesday it is not Wednesday and she utters just falsehoods, so she will respond 'Yes'. On Wednesday it is Wednesday and she utters just falsehoods, so she responds 'No.' On Thursday it is not Wednesday, and she utters just truths, so she responds 'No'. Since the day cannot be determined after the first question the day cannot be Tuesday. On Mondays, she knows what is true, so does not believe it is Wednesday, and so utters the truth 'No'. On Wednesday, she takes all true things to be false, so even though it is Wednesday she does not believe it is Wednesday. Since her believing it is not Wednesday is actually the case and she utters only falsehoods on Wednesdays, she will respond 'Yes' to the question whether she believes it is Wednesday. [Put another way—she actually does not believe it is Wednesday on Wednesday, so since she takes all true things to be false, she must think she does believe it is Wednesday, tell the truth as she sees it and respond 'Yes'.] On Thursday, she takes all true things to be false, so even though it is not Wednesday, she does believe it is Wednesday. Since her believing it is Wednesday is actually the case and she utters only truths on Thursdays she will respond 'Yes'. Since the supplicant knew what day it was after the second question, it must be Monday.

The key to this problem is the fact that on Wednesday and Thursday, the seeress will be mistaken about her own beliefs. For example, she may in fact believe it is Wednesday, but think she does not believe it. While for most of us normal people, asking whether today is Wednesday or whether we believe it is Wednesday are effectively the same question, they are definitely distinct. Given the seeress' quirks the distinctness results in distinct answers on Wednesday and Thursday.

### **New Puzzle: Grading Exams**

You are the most senior instructor of a group of five instructors for advanced critical thinking. The group has received 100 final exams to grade. To divide up the exams, the group uses the following scheme. The highest ranking instructor, (that's you!) makes a proposal on how the exams should be divided amongst them. Then all the instructors (including the one who made the proposal) vote on the proposal. If the proposal gets 50% or more of the votes, it passes and the exams are divided up according to the proposal. Otherwise, the other instructors lock the one who made the proposal in with the graduate students grading the 1000+ introductory critical thinking exams, and repeat the process with the next most senior instructor. Each instructor will vote to minimize the number of exams he or she receives. However, any instructor will also vote against a current proposal if they justifiably believe they will get at most the same number of exams on a future proposal.

*What is the fewest advanced critical thinking exams you could grade? (And not have to help grade any introductory exams, of course!)*

Answers (or guesses), along with any justification you care to offer, should be sent to Geoff Goddu at [ggoddu@richmond.edu](mailto:ggoddu@richmond.edu) by January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE: MEMBERSHIP FORM**

**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](mailto:dhatcher@bakeru.edu)). PayPal will indicate that your payment is to AILACT.

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

**Mail to:** Donald Hatcher, AILACT Treasurer, Department of Philosophy, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS 66006 USA. Email: <[dhatcher@bakeru.edu](mailto:dhatcher@bakeru.edu)>