

**ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC
AND CRITICAL THINKING
(AILACT)
NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 2014**

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From the Editor

The 8th ISSA conference just wrapped up in Amsterdam—a great conference with excellent talks, beautiful weather, and engaging company. Another opportunity to meet up with argumentation scholars is just around the corner. The deadline for the European Conference on Argumentation in Lisbon is in October. Details can be found here: <http://www.ecargument.org>

News and calls for papers for the AILACT sessions of the 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. The notice for the 2014 AILACT Essay Prize is included in 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, 2014. Details of the competition and instructions for submission are all included in the notice.

Also included is round six of an experiment to see how well the purveyors of logic and critical thinking do on a brief quiz. Results from the fifth round are available. This is most likely the last round of the experiment since response rates are too small to constitute a meaningful data pool.

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.

Geoff C. Goddu
University of Richmond
ggoddu@richmond.edu

From the President

Memorial Minute: Stephen P. Norris (1949-2014)

Members of the informal logic and critical thinking community have been saddened to learn of the death of Stephen Norris on February 18, 2014. As Professor and Canada Research Chair in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta, he was an authority on critical thinking teaching and testing and on literacy, especially in and through science education. Norris completed his Ph.D. in philosophy of education in 1981, writing his dissertation, *A Pitfall in the Construct Validation of Ability Tests*, under the direction of Robert Ennis at the University of Illinois. His work with Ennis is still regarded as central in its field. The prolific work he did with his wife and long time collaborator, Linda Phillips, on literacy in reading texts on science, including popular science, is also highly regarded, as is his work overall in the field of science education. As Michael P. Matthews notes in his memorial notice, Norris' work stressed "the value of philosophical training for science education research and discussion." At the end of his life, Norris and Phillips were joined by Yanat Arden in work on adapting primary literature to advance science education in secondary schools. His close friend and colleague, Jonathan Osborne, expressed the character of Norris' contribution this way:

At his heart, Steve Norris was what all communities need—a critical friend. Watching a presentation by him was to observe a model of clarity both in the deliberate thoughtful manner it was presented and in the depth of thought that had gone into his arguments and questions. He was somebody who recognized that the first duty of an intelligent man is to state the obvious and ask the hard questions that others had avoided. In doing so, he enriched our community and advanced our thinking.

The informal logic and critical thinking community extends its condolences to Linda Phillips and all others who were close to Stephen Norris. We are grateful for his contribution to fostering the goals of critical thinking.

James B. Freeman
Hunter College of The City University of New York
President, Association of Informal Logic and Critical Thinking

A Very Short Reasoning Quiz

From April: You, for whatever reason, are trapped in the 334th level of Hell. The warden of this level, Belphegor, has become bored and decides to play a game with 197 of the current occupants of this level of Hell, you among them. The 197 occupants will be lined up, facing the same direction along the line, so that each occupant can see all the occupants in front of him or her but none of those behind him or her. A hat will be placed on each occupant's head, and each hat has a 50% chance of being white, and a 50% chance of being black. (The hats are all independent – there aren't a fixed number of white or black hats). No one can see his or her own hat, but can see the hats of all those in front of him or her in line. Perpendicular to the line of occupants (and visible to all of them) is a line of 197 unlit brimstone torches. Starting at the back of the line, with the person who can see all the remaining 196 occupants, each occupant will be asked what color his or her hat is and answer such that only Belphegor hears the answer. Upon hearing the answer Belphegor will, with a snap of his claws audible to everyone, light the

corresponding torch if the occupant said 'white' and, with a growl audible to everyone leave the torch unlit if the occupant said 'black'. Furthermore, if the occupant gets the color of his or her hat correct, he or she instantly goes up to the 333rd level of Hell; otherwise, the occupant is instantly sent down to the 335th level of Hell. Belphegor will then repeat this process with the next person in line. While the occupants can't communicate with each other in any other way once they are lined up and the hats are placed, they can discuss and agree upon a strategy for guessing beforehand.

Assuming that any agreed upon strategy is perfectly implemented, what is the maximum number of occupants who can be guaranteed escape to the 333rd level of Hell?

Solution: I received just one response to this puzzle which gave an answer of 98. To save 98 occupants, the person at the back of the line says the color of the next person's hat. The next person then says the same as the first person—determinable via the torches. The third from the back says the color of the fourth from the back, who says the same as the third from the back, and so on. Since all the even numbered occupants in the line are guaranteed to escape, since the odd numbered occupant behind them tells them the color of their hat, 98 occupants are guaranteed to escape.

The respondent also admitted that he had no proof that 98 was the maximum. Here is a strategy that does even better. The last person in line says 'white' if the next two hats are the same color and 'black' if they are different. Suppose the last person says 'white'. Hence, the next two hats are the same color. The second to last person in line then says the color of the hat of the person directly in front of him or her in line. The third to last person then says the same as what the person behind him or her said (determinable via Belphegor's sounds or the torches.) Suppose the last person says 'black'. Hence, the next two hats are different colors. The second to last person in line then says the color opposite of the color of the hat of the person directly in front. The third to last person then says the opposite of what the second to last said (determinable via Belphegor's sounds or the torches.) The same process is repeated with the fourth to last person, seventh to last person, etc. providing the same color hat/different color hat information to the next two in line. As a result, two of every three individuals will, if they implement the strategy perfectly be able to guarantee escape. In this case 131 can be saved—two thirds of the last 195 occupants in line (130) plus of one of the remaining two—the second person just tells the first person the color of his or her hat.

So the challenge is to minimize the number of information givers and maximize the number of information receivers. The absolute best minimum would be one information giver. But is there any information this one could give that would be enough, when combined with the preceding responses, for all the remaining occupants in line? Yes. The last person in line could say 'white' if the number of white hats on everyone else in line is even and 'black' if the number of white hats on everyone else in line is odd. Suppose the last person says 'white'. The second to last now counts all the white hats on those in front of him or her. If the number is even, then his or her own hat must be black; if odd, then white. In either case the second to last person can determine the color of his or her hat. If the second to last person said 'white', then the third to last knows there should be an odd number of white hats in front of the second to last. If the second to last person said 'black', then the third to last knows there should be an even number of

white hats in front of the second to last person. Hence, the third to last person can count the number of white hats in front of him or her and determine the color of his or her own hat. Based on the third person's answer, the fourth to last person in line can determine the parity of the white hats in front of third to last person and by counting the number of white hats in front of him or herself determine the color of his or her own hat. The process repeats for each subsequent person in line. Suppose the last person says 'black'. The second to last now counts all the white hats on those in front of him or her. If the number is even, then his or her own hat must be white; if odd, then black. In either case the second to last person can determine the color of his or her hat. Based on this person's answer the third to last can determine the parity of white hats in front of the second to last person and use that information to determine the color of his or her own hat and so on. Hence, the maximum number of occupants who can be guaranteed escape is 196.

New Puzzle: The Secret Convention of High Logicians

You are the sole infiltrator at the Secret Convention of High Logicians (I leave it up to you to decide what kind of logicians these might be). But to thwart infiltrations by the unworthy, the Master Logician places a dot on each attendee's head, such that everyone else can see it except for the person who wears it. (No reflective surfaces allowed!) There are many, many different colors of dots and no one knows in advance what the possible colors might be. All attendees begin in Convention Hall A, and the Master instructs that a bell is to be rung every five minutes: at the moment when an attendee knows the color of the dot on his or her own forehead, the attendee is to leave at the next bell and move to Convention Hall B. Anyone who leaves at the wrong bell or fails to leave at the correct bell is clearly not a true High Logician, but an evil infiltrator, and will be thrown out of the Convention post haste. Before the first bell is rung the Master reassures the group by stating that the puzzle is solvable for High Logicians.

Do you have enough information to avoid detection as an infiltrator?

Answers (or guesses), along with any justification you care to offer, should be sent to Geoff Goddu at ggoddu@richmond.edu by September 25th, 2014.

AILACT @ APA

Eastern Division:

Call for Abstracts: If you are a textbook author and would like to be considered for speaking at an author-meets-instructors AILACT session at the APA Eastern division meeting in January 2016, please send your book's facts of publication and a brief description of the topic you would like to present to Gary Seay at gmseay@aol.com by Nov. 1 2014. Each participant will speak for about 20 minutes, with 30 minutes for questions from the audience.

Initial Program Announcement: (Philadelphia, December, 2014)

AUTHOR-MEETS-CRITICS
Margaret Cuonzo's *Paradox*

CHAIR: Dave Benfield, Montclair State

CRITICS: Russell Dale, Lehman College/CUNY, and the Brecht Forum
Maureen Eckert, UMASS Dartmouth
Mark Zelcer, Independent Scholar

AUTHOR: Margaret Counzo, Long Island University

Central Division: Call for Papers and Panel Discussions for the AILACT Group Session at the American Philosophical Association meeting, February 18-21, 2015, in St. Louis, Missouri, at the Ballpark Hilton.

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-critic, or a joint session with another Group Meeting are very welcome. Please forward this invitation to anyone else you think might be interested in submitting or attending.

Papers and [confirmed] speaker/panalist lists should be submitted by September 30, 2014. Send papers as attachments in pdf or MS Word to the Program Director, Kevin Possin, kpossin@winona.edu<<mailto:kpossin@winona.edu>>.

Pacific Division: Contact Peter Tan (PTan@msmc.la.edu) for more information.

2014 AILACT Essay Prize Call for Submissions

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) invites submissions for the 2014 AILACT Essay Prize. This will be the tenth year in which the prize has been offered.

- Value: \$500 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, 2011 and October 31, 2014, 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 2014 AILACT essay prize, approved by the AILACT Board of Directors, are Sharon Bailin (Professor Emerita, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University), Alec Fisher (Department of Philosophy, University of East Anglia), 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, 2014. The winner will be announced by January 15, 2015. AILACT will publicize the name of the winner on its web site and at AILACT sessions held at APA divisional meetings in 2015.
- 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.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE: MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Form
The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking

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 Web site, <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.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FOR 2014

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?

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