

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

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**From the Editor**

The 2014 AILACT Essay Prize submissions are in and the judges are deliberating. There were 17 submissions this year—yet another increase from the previous 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.

In the From the President section, Jim Freeman provides a summary of the annual AILACT Board Meeting held recently via conference/internet call linking several countries and time zones (and one international airport).

Also included are the results of the sixth and final round of an experiment to see how well the purveyors of logic and critical thinking do on a brief quiz.

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**

### **AILACT Board Annual Meeting, December 4, 2014**

The AILACT Board met by phone conference on December 4. Highlights of the meeting included a significant discussion of innovation for the organization, a revision of the Essay Prize clock, and making registration in the Member's Area of the website a requirement for new members. The principal outcome of the innovation discussion was a consensus that the Board support the formation of a three or four member Innovation Committee, headed up by Frank Zenker, to explore the questions this topic raises and make recommendations for action. At the top of the agenda should be such questions as deciding what are the organization's core interests, its mission, stakeholders (i.e. who would benefit from membership in the organization), and proper budget (small vs large). Can the organization identify a "white space", something which no other organization is doing but which AILACT could do? What may we identify as AILACT's "value proposition"? Why should people feel that AILACT is valuable enough to them to join and pay membership dues? To follow up, I would like to issue a call for members of AILACT to indicate their interest in being members of the committee. (See call from Frank Zenker below.) In connection with a discussion on ARGTHEORY approximately a year ago, I suggested that "Argumentation" be added to the name of the organization, to be known as the Association for Argumentation, Informal Logic, and Critical Thinking (Maurice Finocchiaro suggested the second "A" in "AILACT" be understood to stand for "Argumentation" rather than "and").

Concerning the Essay Prize clock, Derek Allen pointed out that the current clock of papers due by October 31 and the Essay Prize Jury report due in early January may create an undue workload for members of the jury, given the recent increase in number of papers submitted. This year there have been 17. The proposed clock would have papers due on September 1, with jury reports due December 15. This would give jury members an additional month to complete their reports. Other proposals for reducing the workload of jury members were reducing the share of papers each member would be asked to read, increasing the number of jury members, and shortening the term of service to two instead of three years. The Board approved changing the clock by acclamation. Similarly the Board agreed to require new members to register in the Members Only area of the website.

The meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> was promising for the future of AILACT. I hope the follow up, especially concerning innovation, will see the fulfillment of this promise.

James Freeman  
President, AILACT

### **FROM FRANK ZENKER ON THE INNOVATION GROUP:**

I am glad to head a group that works on innovation for AILACT. **To join, please contact me, [Frank.Zenker@fil.lu.se](mailto:Frank.Zenker@fil.lu.se).** We'll have a brief skype meeting, set out standard tasks, and should have a first proposal on AILACT'S value proposition by late Feb 2015, that is to be discussed and then iterated.

## **Upcoming Meetings 2014-2015**

**(1)** *AILACT Session at 2014 APA Eastern Division Meeting, December 27-30, 2014, Marriott Philadelphia Downtown, Philadelphia*

Sunday, December 28 11:15 – 1:15

CHAIR: Dave Benfield, Montclair State

*Author Meets Critics: Paradox, by Margaret Cuonzo*

Critics: Russell Dale (Lehman College/CUNY, and the Brecht Forum)  
Maureen Eckert (UMass Dartmouth)  
Mark Zelcer (Independent Scholar)

Author: Margaret Counzo (Long Island University)

**(2)** *AILACT Session at 2015 APA Central Division Meeting, February 18-21, 2015, St. Louis Ballpark Hilton, St. Louis.*

Friday, February 20 7:00-10:00

TOPIC: Intellectual Virtues and Critical Thinking

CHAIR: Frank Fair (Sam Houston State University)

A. *Speaker:* Wayne Riggs (University of Oklahoma)

B. *Author Meets Critic: Bounded Thinking, by Adam Morton*

Critic: David Wright (Sam Houston State University)

Response: Adam Morton (University of British Columbia)

C. *Speaker:* Benjamin Hamby (Coastal Carolina University)

"Willingness to Inquire: The Cardinal Critical Thinking Virtue"

Commentator: Frank Fair (Sam Houston State University)

*Please join us for this special topic and gathering of scholars.*

**(3)** *AILACT session at the 2015 APA Pacific Division meeting, April 1 - 5, 2015, The Westin Bayshore, Vancouver*

Wednesday, April 1, 8:00-10:00 p.m.

CHAIR: Peter Tan (Mount St. Mary's College)

*Speaker:* Anand Vaidya (San Jose State University)

“Critical Thinking and the Development of the Intellectual Virtues”  
Commentators: Darin Dockstader (College of Southern Nevada)  
Mark Rauls (College of Southern Nevada)

### **A Very Short Reasoning Quiz**

From August: 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?*

Solution: I received one response to this puzzle, which claimed that there was enough information to avoid detection because all high logicians should just stay put, so the infiltrator should just stay put as well.

While it is true that there is enough information for the infiltrator to avoid detection it is not true that everyone will stay put. The puzzle is solvable for High Logicians. Hence, it must be solvable. Hence, no color can be restricted to a single dot. If there were a single dot of a particular color, then the wearer of that color would not even be able to tell that that color was an option to guess and so could not solve the puzzle. Since there are multiples of each dot color, anyone who sees a single dot of another color must have the other dot of that color. So all individuals who have one of exactly two dots of the same color will be able to determine the color of their dot almost immediately and will leave at the first bell. (If no one leaves at the first bell, then the minimum possible number of dots of the same color is three.) After the first bell, anyone who sees exactly two dots of one color must have the third dot of that color and so all three members of such triples will, seeing just two dots of one color, deduce the color of their dots and leave at the next bell. (Again, if no one leaves at the second bell, then there were no triples and attendees can deduce that the minimum possible number of dots of one color is now four.) After the second bell, anyone who sees exactly three dots of one color must have the fourth dot of that color and so all four members of such quadruples will deduce the color of their dots and leave at the next bell. The process repeats until everyone has left (or the infiltrator is discovered.)

Here ends the brief quiz experiment. Response rates were much too small for any meaningful conclusions to be drawn. Thank you to all who submitted responses.

**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 2015**

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)>