

**ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC  
AND CRITICAL THINKING  
(AILACT)  
*NEWSLETTER*  
APRIL 2015**

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**From the Editor**

The winner of the 2014 AILACT Essay Prize is Patrick Bondy. Essay title: "Virtues, Evidence, and Ad Hominem Arguments." Patrick is a postdoctoral fellow at the Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University. He won the 2009 prize. There were two honourable mentions: José Gascon: "Arguing as a virtuous arguer would argue." José is a PhD student at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Spain. Gilbert Plumer: "On novels as arguments." Gilbert, now retired, worked for the Law School Admission Council. A call for submissions for the 2015 prize is included later in this newsletter.

The 2013/14 sessions of AILACT at the three APA meetings have all been completed (the Pacific in early April). Information about the upcoming Eastern division meeting and the recent Central division meeting are available in section 3 below.

A Membership Form is available at the end of this newsletter. Dues, which continue to be \$10.00, may be paid by check or credit card or PayPal; the form should be completed and sent (with a check if payment is by check) to our treasurer, Don Hatcher. Please note the new members are now required to register on AILACT's online Member Area.

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## **From the President**

At the Board's Annual Meeting last December, Frank Zenker proposed formation of an Innovation Committee, which the Board wholeheartedly endorsed. Subsequently Frank was joined by Steven Patterson and Michael Scriven to form the committee, which did considerable work earlier this year. The result has been two thoughtful and ambitious documents, "AILACT Innovation Proposal" and the "Core CT Project." The Board is now considering these documents and will be discussing them and the issues they raise in the near future. I hope to have a progress report about these discussions for the August Newsletter.

James B. Freeman  
President, AILACT

## **AILACT @ APA**

**Eastern Division:** We are looking for some volunteers to serve as either critic or chair at an AILACT session that will take place during the APA Eastern div. meeting in Washington, Jan. 2016. The session will have a generic author-meets-critics format. But since the books in question are used for teaching critical thinking, the comments may be about any theoretical or practical aspects of the target textbook. Thus, comments on the teaching experience using the book will be fine. We have in mind short commentaries, of about 20 minutes or less (3,000 words max.), which should be sent to the author no later than Nov. 1, 2015.

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong plans to present about his MOOC on critical thinking. Presumably, it's built around his book with Fogelin, so the critic may focus on some aspects of that book. For Phil Washburn's book we already have a commentator.

If you are (i) an author of textbook on critical thinking/informal logic and would like to be a speaker in that session or (ii) interested in being a chair or critic in this session email your request to Gary Seay at [gmseay@aol.com](mailto:gmseay@aol.com)

### **Textbook Authors Meet Critics**

Chair: ?

Seay/Nuccetelli's *How to Think Logically*

Critic: ?

Respondent: Gary Seay and Susana Nuccetelli

City University of New York and St. Cloud State University

Fogelin/Sinnott-Armstrong's [\*Understanding Arguments: An Introduction to Informal Logic\*](#)

Critic: ?

Respondent: Walter Sinnott Armstrong

University of North-Carolina/Chapel Hill

Washburn's *The Vocabulary of Critical Thinking*

Critic: Omar Mirza, St. Cloud State University

Respondent: Phil Washburn, New York University

**Central Division:** Report on the AILACT Session at the 2015 APA Central Division Meeting in St. Louis, by session Chair Frank Fair (Sam Houston State University):

The session was held on Friday, Feb. 20, at what appears now to be our traditional time slot of 7:00 pm to 10:00. The theme of the session was “Intellectual Virtues and Critical Thinking.” The underlying idea was to explore connections between the emerging field of virtue epistemology and our efforts as teachers of critical thinking to inculcate not just concepts and procedures related to critical thinking, but also the traits of character that will dispose our students to regularly use those concepts and procedures.

The first presenter was Wayne Riggs of the University of Oklahoma. Wayne’s title was “Understanding, Perspective, and Belief,” and his presentation was a prelude to a larger project on understanding and wisdom. He gave a thought-provoking exploration of the topic which he approached in terms of thinking about understanding in non-sentential terms. The audience had numerous questions and comments about the presentation.

In the second hour, Ben Hamby (Coastal Carolina University) was to present his paper, “Willingness to Inquire: The Cardinal Critical Thinking Virtue.” But just a few weeks before the session, he was told that travel funds from his university were not available. So a colleague of mine, West Gurley, volunteered to read for Ben. I delivered some comments, and West read some follow-up responses in which Ben addressed “the situationist challenge.” That challenge is more familiar in the context of discussing moral virtues as stable traits of character, but it seems to be equally challenging to the idea of intellectual virtues.

Extending “the situationist challenge” in the third hour, David Wright (Sam Houston State University) presented “Sensitive Virtues for Vulnerable Agents: Comments on Adam Morton’s *Bounded Thinking: Intellectual Virtues for Limited Agents*.” David believes that the views developed by Adam (University of British Columbia) in *Bounded Thinking* present a real challenge to traditional conceptions of intellectual virtues. Adam could not be in attendance, but he sent a response to David’s commentary, which I read to the group. We then discussed the issues raised by Adam’s book and by David’s commentary. A number of us then repaired to the hotel bar to continue the discussion. In sum: A good time was had by all.

Some personal thoughts: (1) I am looking forward to seeing Wayne’s project about understanding come to fruition in book form. (2) a version of Ben Hamby’s work will soon be available in *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Thinking in Higher Education*. (3) I am going to suggest to David and Adam that they allow me to publish their exchange in an upcoming issue of *INQUIRY: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines*—I think Adam’s book should be read by everyone doing critical-thinking education, and David’s commentary expresses some sympathetic challenges to Adam’s views.

And (4) when Kevin Possin, the Program Director, informed me about how Ben Hamby was unable to present his own paper due to a cancelation of funding by his institution, Kevin expressed the idea that AILACT should assemble the means, perhaps a travel fund, that it’s members in Ben’s unfortunate situation could apply for. I would like to second that motion.

**Early Call for Papers and Suggestions for the 2016 AILACT Group session, at the Central APA meeting, March 2-5 at the Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL:**

Please send your suggestions on any topic in informal logic, critical thinking, or argumentation. Ideas regarding a guest speaker, panel discussion, author-meets-critic, or a joint session with another Group Meeting are welcome. Please forward this invitation to anyone else you think might be interested in submitting or attending.

Please send emails of interest by August 1, 2015. Papers and confirmed speaker/panelist lists should be submitted by September 30, 2015. Send papers as attachments in pdf or MS Word to the Program Director, Kevin Possin, [kpossin@winona.edu](mailto:kpossin@winona.edu)

***Pacific Division:*** For information about past or future AILACT Sessions at the Pacific APA, please contact Peter Tan at [PTan@msmc.la.edu](mailto:PTan@msmc.la.edu)

**2015 AILACT Essay Prize Call for Submissions**

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) invites submissions for the 2015 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, 2012 and September 1, 2015, 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 Lilian Bermejo Luque, Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, Universidad de Granada; Alec Fisher, Department of Philosophy, University of East Anglia; Geoffrey Goddu, Professor of Philosophy, University of Richmond. 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](mailto: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 September 1, 2015. The winner will be announced by December 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 and 2016.
- For further information about the essay prize, please contact Ben Hamby ([hambyb@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hambyb@mcmaster.ca)).

\*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.

**THE ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC & CRITICAL THINKING**

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FOR 2015**

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.

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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:** \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**New members:** To complete the process of becoming a member of AILACT, you will need to register on AILACT's password-protected Member Area website: <http://ailact1.humanities.mcmaster.ca>. Click on "Register" and complete the listed fields. (These include "User name" and "Password." Make up a user name and a password.) Click on "Register." When your registration has been validated, you will receive an email saying that this has been done and explaining how to enter a profile for yourself on the site.

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