

ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC AND CRITICAL THINKING (AILACT) *NEWSLETTER* DECEMBER 2007

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From the Editor Since the last AILACT Newsletter, the principal news item is the acceptance by the AILACT membership of the resolution on critical thinking outcomes assessment testing. Our President, Derek Allen, has already reported this approval to you. Bob Ennis drafted the resolution, which was referred by AILACT members to the Board when the membership met in Windsor, Ontario in connection with OSSA 7. On June 9, the Board met and approved submitting the resolution, with one amendment, to all the Board members. By late summer, the Board endorsed submitting the amended resolution to the entire membership. AILACT as a scholarly organization now has an official response to the Spellings Commission call for testing college students to determine in a quantitative and easily compared way the extent to which the education at a particular institution of higher learning has increased the ability of its students to think critically.

As Derek Allen has also reported, Bob Ennis has agreed to become AILACT's Director of Special Projects, a new position. His first task will be to rewrite the resolution in a form appropriate for wide distribution. After that, Derek indicates that he "will compile, for the AILACT website, a list of institutions of higher education in Canada and the United States where critical thinking can be studied. He will decide on the length of the list and report the factual information he finds without expressing approval or disapproval. The suggestion that such a list be compiled was made by Bob himself at the meeting of the AILACT Board in June 2007, and the Board approved it."

As with previous issues, this issue includes information on upcoming AILACT meetings. For this coming year, the meetings will all be in conjunction with the divisional meetings of the American Philosophical Association. Again finally, as with all our Newsletters, we end with our membership form. If you are already a member of AILACT, perhaps you know of someone who would be interested in joining. If you have not yet paid your dues for 2007, the form should be a convenient reminder. Again, should any of you have notices or other information you would like included in future issues, please e-mail me at jfreeman@hunter.cuny.edu. Issues should be published close to April 1, August 1, and December 1 each year.

James B. Freeman

Upcoming Meetings 2007-2008

**Group Session at the Eastern Division American Philosophical Association Meetings,
December 27-30, 2007, Baltimore, MD**

Session: Author Meets Critics: *Hot Thought* by Paul Thagard

Date, Time, Hotel, and Meeting Room to be announced.

Chair: Daniel N. Boone

Critic: Carole J. Lee

Critic: Christopher Viger

Author-Respondent: Paul Thagard

**Group Sessions at the APA Pacific Division, American Philosophical Association, March
19-23, 2008**

Session: Critical Thinking: Testing and Evaluation

Date and Time: Friday, March 21, 8:00-10:00 pm, Meeting Room to be announced

Chair: Wanda Teays, Mount St. Mary's College

Speakers: Robert H. Ennis, University of Illinois UC (Emeritus), "A Summary and Discussion of 'Nationwide Testing of Critical Thinking for Higher Education: Vigilance Required' (*Teaching Philosophy*, March, 2008)"

Michael Scriven, Claremont Graduate University (Psychology), "The Logic of Evaluation"

Session: Critical Thinking and Contemporary Critiques of Religion

Date and Time: Saturday, March 22, 6:00-8:00 pm, Meeting Room to be announced

Chair: Darin Dockstader, The College of Southern Nevada

Speakers: Jerry Cederblom, University of Nebraska Omaha, "Critical Reasoning, Belief, and Religious Faith."

Donald L. Hatcher, Baker University, "Critical Thinking and Religion: The Ethics of Belief Revisited."

Group Session at APA Central Division, April 2008

Panel Discussions on Issues in Informal Logic Pedagogy

Date and Time: Friday, April 18, 2008, 7:00-10:00 pm, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL

Meeting Room to be announced

Chair: Kevin Possin (Winona State University)

Topic: Computer-Assisted Argument Mapping

Panelists: Maralee Harrell (Carnegie Mellon University), Andrew Norman (Carnegie Mellon University), Douglas Walton (University of Winnipeg), Mark Daly (California State University, Northridge), Claudia Alvarez Ortiz (University of Melbourne)

Topic: The Perils and Promises of Teaching Critical Thinking Online

Panelists: Geoffrey Frasz (College of Southern Nevada), Jerry Voltura (University of Alaska, Anchorage), Michael Malone (Northern Arizona University), David Hitchcock (McMaster University)

Membership Form The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking

The Association (AILACT) was formed in 1983 to promote research, 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.mcmaster.ca/>, 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 offers an annual Essay Prize for the recent essay judged best in the field.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FOR 2007

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

___ I would like to renew my membership (US\$10 -- or the equivalent**)

(Make checks payable to AILACT)

Name: _____

Institutional affiliation (if any): _____

Date: _____

Please fill in the following:

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ (Very important! Much of our business will be conducted primarily electronically -- but you will not be disenfranchised if you do not have an e-mail address.)

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

Mail with check to: Donald Hatcher, AILACT Treasurer, Center for Critical Thinking, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS 66006 USA Email: <donald.hatcher@bakeru.edu>

*a check in the currency of the member, if the member so chooses