

ETHICA

The Newsletter of the National Communication Association's

Communication Ethics Division

VOL. 21 No. 1
Spring 2008

The 94th Annual Convention of the National Communication Association Friday November 21- Monday November 24, 2008 San Diego, California

The 2008 theme, "unCONVENTIONal," is designed to promote innovation, creativity, and imagination in program planning. Moreover, it underscores and reinforces our association's efforts at outreach and reflects the fact that we are now on the radar of important and powerful associations in Washington, DC and throughout the country, and are being sought out to offer expertise at the national level.

OUR DIVISION'S "CALL"

The deadline to submit was February 13, 2008. We encourage you to make your plans now and circle your calendar for November in San Diego!

The Communication Ethics Division invited papers and innovative program proposals on any aspect of communication ethics, including theory, practice, application, history, or pedagogy. Submissions relating communication ethics to the unCONVENTIONal theme of the 2008 conference were encouraged. We invited and welcomed papers and panel proposals from members of other divisions, or proposals that combine the perspectives of other areas of the discipline with ethical concerns.

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Editor for this issue of ETHICA:

Melissa A. Cook

Written contributions for ETHICA REQUESTED and ENCOURAGED!

Send articles, notes, news, requests to the Editor!
The next edition is tentatively scheduled for fall 2008. Deadline is August 1:

Melissa A. Cook, St. Vincent College
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We will have about a dozen slots this year at the NCA convention in San Diego. Questions regarding this year's convention can be directed to our division's Vice President and 2008 Program Planner: Pat J. Gehrke, Department of English, University of South Carolina patg@sc.edu

10th National Communication Ethics Conference set for June 12-15, 2008 in Pittsburgh

Janie M. Harden Fritz, Duquesne University
S. Alyssa Groom, Duquesne University

The Communication Ethics Division of the National Communication Association will hold its tenth national conference from June 12-15, 2008 at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. The conference theme is "Communication Ethics and Crisis: Negotiating Differences in Public and Private Spheres." The conference Scholar in Residence, selected by past Scholars in Residence, is Dr. Ronald C. Arnett, who will deliver a keynote address.

With nine panels devoted to the conference theme, the conference offers a chance to engage ideas in a collegial, focused, high-density format. The Scholar in Residence for the 10th National Communication Ethics Conference, Ronald C. Arnett, will engage the conference topic in his address "Ethics and Communicative Crisis: The Interface of Communication Ethics and Crisis Communication in a World of Narrative and Virtue Contention."

The conference will be held on the Duquesne University campus in the Power Center facility. This brand new facility will be home to our conference for the weekend and we invite you to peruse the Power Center website for more details about its amenities:

<http://www.duq.edu/powercenter/ballroom.html>

TO REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE:

Download the registration form via this link to the conference website

<http://www.gradcomm.duq.edu/conference/conference.htm>

For more information on the conference, contact Dr. Janie M. Harden Fritz (412-396-6558) or Dr. S. Alyssa Groom (412-396-6436), or via email at cec@duq.edu



Tentative Schedule Overview

Thursday, June 12th

5:30 pm Registration Opens
 6:30-8:30 pm Welcome Reception (local venue TBA; appetizers provided; cocktails available for purchase)

Friday, June 13th

8:00 am Registration Opens (until noon)
 8:00-9:00 Breakfast
 9:00-11:45 Sessions
 12:00-1:30 pm Lunch
 1:30-4:15 Sessions
 4:15-4:45 Break
 4:45-6:00 Sessions
 6:00-7:00 Cocktail Hour (appetizers provided; cocktails available for purchase)
 7:00 Dinner and Keynote Address

Saturday, June 14th

8:00-9:00 am Breakfast
 9:00-11:45 Sessions
 12:00-1:30 pm Lunch
 1:30-4:15 Sessions
 4:15-4:45 Break
 4:45-6:00 Interdisciplinary Plenary on Communication Ethics and Crisis Management
 6:00 Closing Reception

Sunday, June 15th

9:00 am CEC Roundtable Discussion: "Communication Ethics and Crisis Management: Campus Violence" (continental breakfast; all interested parties invited)

Preconference Draws Crowd!

Paula Tompkins, St. Cloud State
Pre Conference Co-chair

Over 40 persons attended the Division's 2007 pre-conference in Chicago on *Communication Ethics, Religious Faith and Culture*. Using the model of extended discussion of presentations by scholars used at the biennial Communication Ethics Conference at Duquesne University, scholars and participants explored intersections of communication practices, ethics, religious faith, and culture.

Discussion of universals in ethics began the pre-conference. The opening discussion was stimulated by positions papers on universals and ethics. Ron Arnett (Duquesne) explored Hannah Arendt on difference, Cliff Christians (UL-Champaign) on the golden rule as a universal, and Sharon Bracci (UNC—Greensboro) on the use of universals in the practice of communication ethics.

As the afternoon continued positions papers stimulated discussion threads exploring the preconference themes of religious faith, culture, and communication ethics. Kathleen Roberts (Duquesne University) stimulated discussion of the challenges of intercultural understand, Lisbeth Lipari (Dennison University) the significance of taking listening seriously, Josina Makau (UC, Monterey Bay) empathic listening and culture, Ken Chase (Wheaton College) religious communication and ethics, and Heidi Campbell (Texas A&M) the use of the internet by religious groups.

The pre-conference came full circle with a closing discussion of universals stimulated by an exploration of communication ethics without universals by Pat Gehrke (U South Carolina) and a case study of a community confronting racist violence in its recent past by Spoma Jovanovic (UNC-Greensboro). In the final comments of the pre-conference several attendees noted that the presenters and participants had succeeded in creating the spirit of the Communication Ethics Conference at Duquesne at an NCA Convention.

Thanks to my preconference co-chair, Melissa Cook (St. Vincent College) for working with me over the past year to prepare for this event. We both want to thank Leeanne Bell (Villa Julie College) for assisting us during the event itself.

A Note from the Immediate-Past Chair

Chris Poulos, UNC — Greensboro

We had a vibrant conference in Chicago (truly the city of wind, but this time a nice wind indeed), beginning with the pre-conference (wow!) all the way through a diverse and engaging set of panels and right into our business meeting. It was, to me, yet another excellent demonstration of why I continue to remain affiliated with the Communication Ethics Division: You are, truly, good people.

As I step beyond my responsibilities as Chair to my ongoing responsibilities as a past Chair, I am struck with a sense of awe and wonder at the beautiful friendships I have forged in the division these past few years--friendships grounded in genuine dialogue, in mutual esteem, and in the joint search for the ethical in our communicative lives. Does it get any better than this?

Looking back on what seemed like a short tenure as your Division Chair, I also must state unequivocally that the job was one of the easiest I have ever been asked to do. The beauty of it is that the leadership team is so willing to give, so able, and so smart that little input was needed from me. Man, it's easy to look good when you are surrounded by good people!

I also want to thank everyone in the Division for your support. I am honored to be a part of such brilliant group of scholars and friends. Thank you for your thoughtful (and often joyous) engagement with each other, for your great questions, for your teaching and your writing, for your willingness to play with difficult issues and ideas, for your active wrestling with ethical concerns and dilemmas, and for your dynamic engagement with the quest for virtue in a complex world. I look forward to many, many more stimulating and exciting dialogic moments with you all.

Communication Ethics Division 2007 Business Meeting Minutes —NCA Convention, Chicago, IL Saturday, November 17, 2007, 12:30 pm

The Division of Communication Ethics business meeting was called to order at 12:32 pm at NCA in Chicago, with Chair Chris Poulos presiding. He opened by reminding everyone that this was an open meeting and that the communication ethics division is the fastest growing division in NCA. Poulos acknowledged past and present officers: Roy Wood, past chair, Tammy Swenson-Lepper, immediate past chair, Ken Chase, first vice chair and program planner, Pat Gehrke, second vice chair and next year's program planner, Bert Ballard, treasurer/secretary, and Melissa Cook, Ethica editor and website coordinator.

There was a motion by Chris Johnstone with a second by Ken Chase to approve last year's NCA business meeting minutes. The motion carried.

Chase reported on this year's convention, remarking that it was an honor to serve as program planner. There were 11 slots allotted to the communication ethics division with 31 complete paper submissions (18 student, 13 non-student) and 16 panel submissions. Fifty-two percent of the papers were accepted (16 papers), with 15 placed on panels and one placed in a scholar-to-scholar session; 38% of the panels were accepted (6 panels). There was an overall acceptance rate of 47%. In addition, the division co-sponsored a panel entitled "Conversations on the Edge," given the theme of ethics for this year's convention. Chase thanked the nine reviewers for their hard work. Chase also encouraged attendees to offer feedback to Gehrke on next year's convention, especially regarding how to theme papers for panels, time limits, and the ratio of panels to papers.

Ballard provided the treasurer's report. He reported that the tax ID number had finally been tracked down; the number is 39-1949515. A bank account with Chase had been set up and offers the division flexibility and online access. The current balance is \$604.47, and he and Wood are signers on the account. Completion of paperwork for non-profit/tax exempt status was nearing and would be submitted soon. The University of Denver will

serve as a home address for the division and having non-profit status will allow tax deductible donations and offer a framework for growth in regards to publications, conferences, and revenue. Having non-profit status will not harm the division's relationship with NCA. The incorporators are Ballard, Wood, Poulos, and Chase.

Janie Harden Fritz reported on behalf of Cook. Fritz reported thanks on behalf of Cook and encouraged members to submit to Ethica. The newsletter is distributed every fall and winter, generally right before and right after NCA. Please submit any articles of interest and on time to Cook.

Committee reports were next. Paula Tompkins reported on the preconference. She reported that it went well, with 40 attending the preconference and 1 registering that day. The theme was "Communication Ethics, Religious Faith, and Culture." Comments from the floor encouraged everyone to attend a preconference because it is very rewarding, and it was encouraged that the division seek another preconference for next year's convention, possibly on listening.

Gehrke reported that he and Lisbeth Lipari are co-editors of a special journal of the International Journal of Listening focused on communication ethics. There were very few submissions to the special edition, which were high in quality but did not demonstrate a case for a stand-alone communication ethics journal. The conversation regarding a dedicated publishing outlet for communication ethics can and should continue in the future.

Gehrke also announced the call for next year's NCA, with the theme of "Unconventional." The deadline for submission is February 13, 2008. He encouraged promoting the call even outside of NCA and in non-traditional outlets. He reminded attendees that with the growth in the division, there would be more submissions. However, with the same amount of spaces allocated, acceptance rates would be lower. He asked for reviewers for next year's convention.

Chase reported that the committee on awards and resolutions had made little progress. However, this year's NCA raised questions about the division's role in offering public awards and entering (cont. p. 4)

the conversation at the national level related to a positive ethics program, submitting resolutions to NCA, or web publications. There was open discussion related to continuing this effort, and Wood agreed to lead efforts to explore how the division can become more involved in national level in regards to awards, opinions, and issue statements. Wood requested assistance from members and a sign-up was circulated.

Swenson-Lepper announced three changes to the bylaws and requested a motion to approve. The changes included editorial updates, indicating that the secretary/treasurer would officially maintain the bylaws, and that Ethica would be distributed in September/October and February/March. Karen Zediker moved to approve the changes, Karen Lollar seconded. The motion carried and the changes were approved.

Swenson-Lepper reported on the NCA legislative session. There were 6200 at this year's NCA, one of the largest attended conventions ever. There were two important decisions made at the legislative session this year. First, the deadline for preregistration for NCA was set at August 6, 2008 to ensure that participants would not be dropped from the program and to ensure better fee collection. Second, there were changes in the dues structure wherein Sustaining and Patron members would pay about \$35 more per year and student fees would remain the same.

Swenson-Lepper also announced division winners for outstanding publications in the area of communication ethics. The Top Edited Book was Pat Arneson (Duquesne University) for *Exploring Communication Ethics: Interviews With Influential Scholars in the Field* (2007, Peter Lang Publishing). The journal article award went to Spoma Jovanovic (UNC- Greensboro) and Roy V. Wood (University of Denver) for "Communication Ethics and Ethical Culture: A Study of the Ethics Initiative in Denver City Government" (*Journal of Applied Communication Research*, Vol. 34, No. 4, November 2006, pp. 386 – 405). No award was given for Top Single or Dual Book. The awards committee members were Michelle Leavitt, Elesha Ruminski, and Swenson-Lepper and they were thanked by Swenson-Lepper for their time and work. Award winners would receive plaques on behalf of the division.

Chase announced the convention awards. The Top Student Paper was awarded to Melba Velez (University of Illinois at Urbana) for "Toward an Ethic of Limits: Conservation as a Protonorm for Moral Communication." The Top Overall Paper was awarded to Peggy Bowers (Clemson University) for "Cultural Humanism as Journalism Ethics Corrective: Cases from Press Coverage of the Muslim World." Both top papers would receive nominal cash awards.

Swenson-Lepper reported that she attended the National Media Ethics Summit. Clifford Christians and Ron Arnett also represented the division there. At the Summit, held February 27 - March 2, 2007, representatives from academic and professional organizations met to discuss how ethical issues in the media have changed since the first media ethics summit, held in 1987. The summit also looked to the future to see what ethical issues might arise.

Swenson-Lepper reported that there were two positions open on the division board, Secretary/Treasurer and Second Vice Chair. For Secretary/Treasurer, Swenson-Lepper nominated Ballard for a second term and the nomination was seconded by Fritz. For Second Vice Chair, Swenson-Lepper nominated Jovanovic and the nomination was seconded by Gehrke. Per the bylaws, both individuals were affirmed to their respective positions for the coming terms.

Fritz announced the National Communication Ethics Conference to be held at Duquesne University June 12-15, 2008. The theme is Communication Ethics and Crisis and the deadline to submit is January 15, 2008.

Richard Johannesen announced that the International Communication Association was helping to publish a handbook on communication ethics, edited by George Cheney (University of Utah), Steve May (University of North Carolina), and Debashish Munshi (University of Waikato, Hamilton, NZ).

Gehrke announced that the division's website, which was linked to NCA, has been removed and will not be revived. The executive committee is considering other alternatives for a division website.

(cont. p. 5)

Poulos officially passed the gavel to Chase, who assumed the role of chair. Poulos also thanked Swenson-Lepper for her four years of service to the division.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bert Ballard, Secretary/Treasurer
 University of Denver

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to our 2007 NCA paper/panel reviewers:

Mohammad Auwal
 Marie Baker-Ohler
 Robert Ballard
 Pat Gehrke
 Annette Holba
 Spoma Jovanovic
 Michelle Leavitt
 Lisbeth Lipari
 Daniel Rossi-Keen

Message from the Division Chair: *Communication Ethics All Around* Ken Chase, Wheaton College

“Don’t tell me words don’t matter. ‘I have a dream’—just words? ‘We hold these truth to be self-evident, that all men are created equal’—just words?”

These are the words Senator Barack Obama uttered in Wisconsin on February 16, words that generated much political heat over the ethics of public discourse. As we all know by now, Senator Clinton’s campaign noted that Obama’s phrasings were borrowed, without acknowledgement, from the Massachusetts gubernatorial campaign of Deval Patrick. Clinton’s charge of plagiarism is part of the bigger picture her campaign is painting of Obama: he covers his lack of consequential political experience with eloquence.

The ethical charges here are not as simple as they first appear. Plagiarism is not easily determined in Obama’s case. Giving someone else’s ideas and words as if they are ones own is plagiarism; reproducing a refrain from another orator may simply be a practice of rhetorical literacy. The phrasings and stylings of stump oratory—the type of oratory a presidential candidate produces multiple times a day and hundreds of times a campaign—inevitably will draw on the reservoir of discourses from other candidates, other times, and other events. Some of these flourishes are very good and ought to be repeated; so it is with Senator Obama, who found an apt retort for a damaging charge.

My ethical sensibility would have preferred that Obama provide a grateful nod to Gov. Patrick for this rhetorical riff, but puzzling over this one matter ought not to distract us from the other weighty charge from Senator Clinton’s camp, namely, that Sen. Obama’s discourse is disingenuous, distracting and manipulating voters at the expense of reasoned and realistic deliberation. This is an ancient charge against rhetoric, of course, but it must be continuously considered. And it is fundamentally an ethical charge, a big picture ethical issue that the popular press has overlooked in their pursuit of plagiarism. Since words can shape public action, we ought to distinguish morally admirable from morally blameworthy discourse. Plagiarism can be a criterion for assessment, but we need a more fulsome ethic of aspirational discourse to get it right. It is our good fortune in the Communication Ethics Division to foster research and discussion on this and other crucial matters. With the 10th Communication Ethics Conference this summer at Duquesne and the NCA convention next fall in San Diego, we will sharpen our sensibilities in the art of ethical action. Hope to see you at one or both of these valuable events!

To become a user in the Communication Ethics Division LISTSERV

Follow these guidelines:

- To start sending messages to members of our group, send an e-mail to comethics@yahoogroups.com
- To reply to a message, simply answer the message and your reply will be sent to all members.
- To become a new subscriber to our listserv, send an e-mail to comethics-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- To communicate with the moderator, send an e-mail to comethics-owner@yahoogroups.com
- If you do not wish to belong to our com ethics group, you can unsubscribe by sending an e-mail to comethics-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

If you wish to receive a private response from our group members, enclose your own e-mail address in your note and encourage people to send you a note using that address, rather than the group address.

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