

RCA NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter of the Religious Communication Association

Winter 2004 (1:1)

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JOIN THE LISTSERV ...

You may join the e-mail based listserv by sending a message to "majordomo@calvin.edu" with no subject line and the words "subscribe rca" in the message body text. (Don't include the quotation marks in the address or the message). You can unsubscribe by sending a message to "majordomo@calvin.edu" with the text "unsubscribe rca" in the message body. (Once again, don't include the quotation marks). To post a message, simply address it to "rca@calvin.edu".

FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

"The purpose of the Association shall be to provide a common organization for the study of religious communication by teachers, practitioners, and scholars"

~ RCA Constitution

Commonality is fundamental to community. As an organization we've come together to offer each other support and challenge in our scholarship on communication and religion—a common purpose. But RCA has become so much more than a place to present a paper. It is a community with its own history, traditions, rituals, and experiences. One of those rituals is a post-convention newsletter.

By now, the Christmas season is fading to a memory, the Miami Beach RCA/NCA is the distant past, but it's important that we pause to reflect on that convention as well as look to the future—November in Chicago.

Highlights of this issue include: highlights from the minutes of the meetings, the award recipients, a report on John Angus Campbell's speech at the banquet, and the official calls for papers for NCA in Chicago and for an exciting new RCA pre-conference. The conference in Miami Beach demonstrated yet again the vibrancy of the Religious Communication Association, the range of its scholarship, and its commitment to facilitating a community where religious communication is the focus rather than the footnote of study and interaction.

In addition to the reports, please know that your executive committee has been hard at work dreaming up ways to foster the on-going community of scholarship. As a result, you'll read in this issue about the RCA pre-conference to be held a few blocks north of the Hilton. The pre-conference offers a marvelous opportunity for us to discuss our identity and our vision, as well as to practice our scholarship. I encourage you to consider submitting papers for this event as well as for the main conference.

Finally, don't forget about the opportunities to communicate with each other apart from the convention—post to the RCA listserv. Share the history of RCA that you know, challenge our thinking, and network for the next convention. It's our hope that the listserv could become the place where job notices, conferences of interest, and discussions vital to our identity are found.

Let's be a scholarly community that not only honors its history, but also embraces its future through diligent and compassionate engagement.

Annalee Ward, President

Nominations for awards ...

RCA Executive Council:

*President: Annalee Ward,
Trinity Christian College*

*First Vice President: Thomas
Lessl, University of Georgia*

*Second Vice President: Paul
Soukup, Santa Clara
University*

*Councilors:
Michael Eidenmuller (04),
University of Texas at Tyler
Calvin Troup (05), Duquesne
University
Alyssa Groom (06,
Duquesne University*

*Executive Secretary: Becky
Johns, Weber St. University*

*Immediate Past President:
Dave Klope, Trinity Christian
College*

*RCA Newsletter Editor:
Marcia Everett, Malone
College*

*JCR Editor: Helen Sterk,
Calvin College*

*HOMILETIC Editors:
John Holbert, Alyce
McKenzie, Perkins School of
Theology*

FROM THE SECOND VICE PRESIDENT...

The revision of the by-laws voted into effect at our meeting in Miami gives the second vice-president two principal duties: administering the annual awards competition and membership. A few words about each.

Nominations for Annual Awards ~ Book, Article & Dissertation Awards

The Religious Communication Association is accepting nominations for its annual outstanding Book, Article, & Dissertation awards. The **Book Award** is granted for the outstanding scholarly book on religious communication published between 2002 and 2004. Authors should send one copy of the book and a letter of nomination outlining the value of the book in its area of study. For consideration, please include a short synopsis of the book (3-5 pages). The **Article Award** is granted for an outstanding article on religious communication published during the past two years. Five copies should be submitted along with a 1-2 page letter of nomination outlining the significance of the article. The **Dissertation Award** is for an outstanding dissertation in religious communication completed during the previous academic year. 1-2 page nominations may be made by the dissertation advisor or department chair. Nominees are asked to forward four copies of the completed dissertation. Eligible dissertations will have been completed during the period from August 1, 2003 to August 1, 2004.

Winners will be recognized at the annual RCA meeting occurring in conjunction with NCA in Chicago. Cash awards are presented in each category. **The deadline for the submission of materials and nominations for the Book Award and Article Award is July 1; for the Dissertation Award, August 1.**

Send nominations and materials to:

Paul A. Soukup, S.J.
Communication Department
Santa Clara University
500 El Camino Real
Santa Clara, CA 95053
tel: 408-554-4022
psoukup@scu.edu

Membership-shared recruiting!

Paper submissions, attendance at RCA sponsored panels, and general interest draws people from throughout the NCA, many of them non-members of our association. Each of us probably knows one or more colleagues who show an interest in religious communication but have not yet joined.

Could each of us, perhaps as a kind of New Year's resolution, ask one such person to join the RCA? Personal contact usually works better than any other kind of recruiting.

Highlights from the 2003 Convention in Miami:

- Awards Recipients: Em Griffin received the Scholar of the Year Award, Nancy Eckstein and Paul Turman received the Article of the Year award, Kevin Miller received the Dissertation of the Year Award and Robin Riley received the Book of the Year Award. Nominations are open for 2004 awards. New award for 2004: Outstanding Student Paper submission.
- Elections: Paul Soukup was elected Second Vice-President and Alyssa Groom was elected Councilor.
- Convention Report and Planning: 2003 RCA convention featured 31 sessions and over 100 scholars. Next year (Chicago 2004), we may have fewer session slots available so a reorganization of RCA units was announced and ideas were discussed regarding how to enable as many RCA participants in next year's convention as possible, including a pre-conference.
- By-Laws Revision: Two proposals to change the RCA by-laws were presented and passed.
- Web site changing hands: Michael Eidenmuller is our new RCA webmaster and will be overhauling our web site early in 2004. For now our RCA web site address is americanrhetoric.com/rca/.
- We were fortunate to have as our speaker at the RCA banquet John Angus Campbell, professor of rhetoric at the University of Memphis, who is best known for his award-winning work on the rhetoric of Charles Darwin. This careful and detailed work has influenced scholarly thought about the public communication of science in a number of fields. In recent years John's work has also been concerned with the role of religious speech in public life, especially as this concerns the issue of science education on origins.

Professor Campbell's banquet presentation explored the implications for religious communication of the book *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*, (Michigan State University Press, 2003), which he has co-edited with Stephen Meyer. This volume examines the debate that is currently raging in academic and political settings over the rise of intelligent design (ID) as a challenge to the neo-Darwinian paradigm. Central to the ID movement is its claim that if science educators are prohibited from discussing and debating alternative views on origins in American classrooms, then science education becomes merely a form of state-sponsored propaganda. John emphasized in his talk that the current silencing of the origins debate in public education stands at odds not only with the spirit of science but also with the philosophy of communication that is implied in the very notion of a democratic society. More specifically he argued that scientific discussion on origins logically coincides with consideration of theological questions. He supported this idea by showing that the emergence of modern science occurred in a context of open dialogue between theology and naturalistic explanation. Even Darwin's landmark presentation of evolutionary thought openly and fairly explored the alternative viewpoint of design.

Thank you Professor Campbell for your eloquent presentation.

Check out the
Business Meeting
and Banquet
Highlights ...

RCA website has a
new location:
[http://www.
americanrhetoric.com/rca/](http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rca/)

Bookmark it now!

**A FIRST ... an RCA
Pre-Conference**

RCA Pre-Conference in Chicago, Wednesday, November 10th, 2004

At the 2003 NCA Convention in Miami Beach, the RCA Executive Committee learned that the number of convention panels available to RCA for the 2004 convention in Chicago would be reduced. This reduction was part of a comprehensive NCA plan to reduce the number of panels and to distribute the number of panels more equitably based on membership numbers in NCA divisions and affiliated organizations that have traditionally been included in the NCA convention program. (Editor's Note: See CRTNET discussion about this issue)

Given the quality of RCA presentations in the past few years and the benefit of presenting at NCA for RCA members, the RCA Executive Committee considered opportunities that the NCA changes might present. After receiving enthusiastic support from the membership at the second business meeting, the executive committee decided to plan the 2004 RCA Pre-Conference, which will be held in Chicago on Wednesday, November 10th, 2004, beginning at noon. The Pre-Conference will be held at the new facilities of The Chicago Semester, 11 East Adams, 12th Floor. The Chicago Semester facility is located about five blocks from the NCA Convention Hotel, the Chicago Hilton & Towers. Additional details for the program, including panels, a plenary session, and evening reception are being finalized.

RCA has traditionally served its members through the RCA annual meeting at the NCA convention and the Journal of Communication and Religion. We are hopeful that the pre-conference can serve as another site through which RCA can cultivate significant interaction and ideas as we gather to discuss our shared interests as teachers, scholars, and colleagues--particularly concerning questions of the relationship between communication and religion.

ABOUT SUBMISSION FOR PRE-CONFERENCE AND/OR NCA ...

As we understand the submission guidelines for the 2004 convention, RCA is one unit within NCA. According to the NCA guide for planners, participants are to "submit no more than one paper per unit." The planners have been asked to schedule / submit "only one paper from any person submitting as first author." Those interested in participating in both the RCA pre-conference and RCA panels at the NCA convention may do so by submitting two different papers and/or proposals. If a proposal is linked closely to the pre-conference theme, then it should be submitted to the pre-conference. If a program proposal has broad appeal beyond RCA and/or involves a number of panelists who are not RCA members, it should go through the standard RCA divisions to be programmed during the NCA convention.

**CALLS FOR THE
PRE-CONFERENCE
AND FOR RCA
PANELS AT NCA**

PRECONFERENCE CALL:

"Identity and Vision: Grounds, Challenges, and Implications for Religious Communication"

The Religious Communication Association (RCA) will host its first pre-conference on November 10, 2004, in Chicago, IL in conjunction with the 90th Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association (NCA), November 11-15, 2004.

RCA invites submissions of completed papers, extended abstracts, and panel proposals. The inaugural theme is "Identity and Vision: Grounds, Challenges, and Implications for Religious Communication."

Since 1973, the Religious Communication Association has been a site for conversation among Communication scholars and practitioners concerning their common interests in religious speech, media, performance, and other communication. As a nonsectarian association, RCA strives to provide a setting in which persons of various faiths, or no faith, can study the problems of Communication and Religion.

We invite work oriented toward questions of Communication and Religion from the full range of scholarly approaches in the field. We are particularly interested in work that addresses issues related to: religious perspectives on the pre-suppositional grounds of communication; the implications of religious perspectives on professional communication practices; relationships between religion, popular culture, and communication; religion and public life; the role of RCA in the discipline.

The pre-conference will be an official NCA-related event, which includes participation NCA's All-Academic submission process.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: February 16, 2004

Given the challenges of last year's NCA submission process, we request that a duplicate of online submissions be sent via e-mail attachment in WORD or in hard copy to:

S. Alyssa Groom
340 College Hall
Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies
Duquesne University
600 Forbes Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15282 412.396.6436 grooms@duq.edu

"MOVING FORWARD/LOOKING BACK": CALL FOR THE 2004 NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION CONVENTION IN CHICAGO

Submission method: All papers and proposal must be submitted on-line to the All Academic site.

Deadline: February 16, 2004

The Religious Communication Association invites thematic panel proposals on "Moving Forward/Looking Back" and competitive papers concerned with communication and religion. Members are also encouraged to submit proposals and papers for discussion panels, since 25% of panels are required to take this form. The areas of scholarship formerly represented by seven divisions in RCA are now organized within the three broader headings of Mediated Communication, Communication Studies, and Rhetorical Studies.

The following paragraphs should help you to decide to which division chair your papers and proposals should be sent. Be sure to identify the specific area, (i.e. rhetorical theory, performance, advertising, etc.) in which you are submitting your work.

Mediated Communication: Skip Rutledge, Communication Studies, Point Loma Nazarene University, 3900 Lomaland Drive, Cabrillo 103, San Diego, California 92106-2899; 619-849-2391; skiprutledge@ptloma.edu Submissions in the areas of public relations, advertising, theory, and curriculum/instruction (as related to media) should also be sent to this division.

Communication Studies: Paul Lakey, Abilene Christian University, Station Box 28156, Abilene TX 79699-8156; 915-674-2292; lakeyp@acu.edu Submissions in the areas of interpersonal and organizational communication as well as relevant panels and papers dealing with theory, curriculum/instruction, gender and cultural studies should be sent to this division.

Rhetorical Studies: Matthew Althouse, Department of Communication SUNY Brockport, 350 New Campus Rd. Brockport, NY 14420; 585-395-2008; malthous@brockport.edu Submissions in the areas of public address and performance should be sent to this division, as well as panels and programs pertaining to rhetorical theory and curriculum/instruction.

All submissions will be done online via All Academic. Papers authored solely by students or persons who have never presented at the NCA convention should be marked "student" or "debut" on the upper right hand corner of the title page. Requests for audio-visual equipment should only be made only if this is genuinely vital to the proposed presentation. Such requests must be made with the paper and panel proposals by the Feb. 16 deadline. Participants are asked to submit no more than one paper per unit.

For additional information refer to "How to Submit Papers and Panel/Program Proposals" in the general NCA call. Also see "Competitive Paper Submissions," "Poster Sessions," and the call's description of "discussion" panels.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Complete the following (please print):

- Renewed Membership
- New Member

Last Name : _____ First Name: _____

Title: _____

Institutional Affiliation: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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Home Phone: _____

Type of Membership:

- Regular (\$25)
- Institutional (\$50)
- Emeritus
- Student (\$12.50)
- Sustaining (\$45)
- Life (\$250 once – a great deal!)

Any questions? email: bjohns@weber.edu

Be sure to encourage your institution's library to subscribe to our journal! It's a great deal at only \$50.00 per year for U.S. mailing and a great way for RCA to support our association and especially the publishing of our journal. Make a point right now of contacting your institution's library to check if they subscribe and if not, encourage them to do so. Have the library personnel contact Becky Johns directly at the address below for more information.

Please fill out this form and mail to Becky Johns, RCA Executive Secretary, Weber State University, 1605 University Circle, Ogden, UT 84408-1605. Make checks payable to RCA. Thanks!

[Overseas memberships: Add \$10 in US currency to amount listed]
Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt.