

NYSCA REPORTS

Newsletter of the New York State Communication Association

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2004 Conference Highlights

by Marie Garland

Planning for the 2004 conference is well underway, and as noted in the Call for Papers, (see page 6) the deadline for submissions is fast approaching. The conference site – the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa – served us well last year and we look forward to returning. The location “works” because it fits the NYSCA experience: lots of opportunities for both formal and informal interaction and community building. And the views from the Tower rooms aren’t bad either!

Some program items to note include the annual award for best student paper, the presentation of the John F. Wilson Fellowship and Neil Postman Mentor Awards, and a keynote presentation by Stanley Deetz.

Opportunities for students abound at NYSCA, and the award for best student paper was established to both encourage and recognize the outstanding student accomplishments in the state. Students should submit completed papers or extended abstracts (with the complete paper to follow prior to September 1st) in order to be considered for the award.

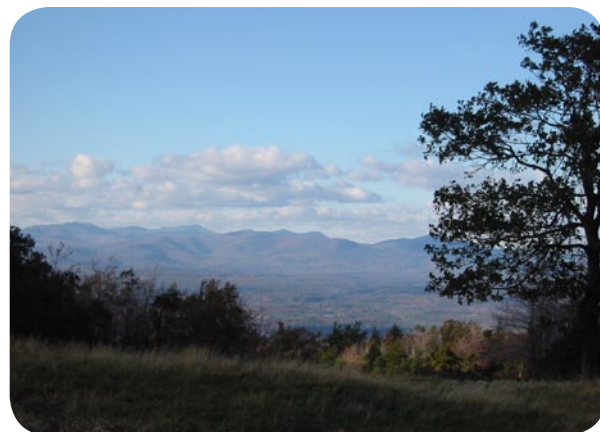
The John F. Wilson Fellowship award (see page 5) was established to recognize an exemplary record of scholarship and service to the Association. Past award winners include Neil Postman, Gary Gumpert (Communication Landscapers), Lance Strate (Fordham), Susan Drucker (Hofstra), Deborah Borisoff (NYU), Dan Hahn (NYU), and Laurie Arliss (Ithaca).

The Neil Postman Mentor Award was established in memoriam at the 2003 NYSCA meeting and will be presented for the first time at the upcoming 2004 convention. Past presidents of the Association, under the leadership of Immediate Past President Carol Wilder, have the responsibility of determining the award recipient.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that Stanley Deetz, Professor of Communication at the University of Colorado Boulder will be our featured Saturday keynote speaker. Deetz has served as editor of *Communication Yearbook*

(volumes 15, 16, and 17), and authored or co-authored nine books in communication theory, organizational communication, and critical communication research. In addition, he has authored 30 refereed articles and book chapters, and nearly 40 invited serial publications. Prior to his post at Colorado, Deetz had served on the faculties at Rutgers University, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and Bridgewater State College.

More information about the conference as it is available will be posted on the NYSCA website. Membership and conference registration forms can also be downloaded directly from the site. If you have questions, contact the planning committee at nysca2004@yahoo.com.



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photo of New Paltz, NY by ari kissiloff

Annual Conference Report. New York: The State of Communication (61st Annual Conference)

By Edward Lenert

The annual conference was held October 25 – 26, 2003 at The Hudson Valley Resort & Spa in the scenic Catskills region near New Paltz, New York. The conference was well-attended and included delegates from as far away as from the city of Manila, Philippines. All in all, the organizers received many positive comments concerning the content of the conference and the selection of the new facility for the annual meeting.

The theme of the conference, “Celebrating our Accomplishments and Questioning our Assumptions” was directly addressed by the keynote speaker, John Downing. Professor Downing has been a communication scholar since 1981, when he joined the faculty at Hunter College, City University of New York, and later served as Chair. In the 1990s, he was Chair of the Radio-Television-Film Department at the University of Texas, Austin. Starting this year, he is the Director of the new Global Media Research Center in the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

In his address to NYSCA, Downing criticized, in a good natured manner, eight failings that he said were characteristic of current U.S. communication and media studies research. He began his talk by stating that he wished to make it clear that his principal target of attack was the conventional U.S. communication research, which he observed constitutes the bulk of what is published in the field across the

world. He noted that, “Those of us who attend annual communication research conferences know only too well how hard it can be to find a panel that addresses original issues or old issues in an original manner.” He added that, “Replication and temporary fads are all too frequently the leathery and tasteless diet on the conference menu.”

To address these perceived problems, Downing offered the following list of specifics, and developed each theme in turn: (1) the urgent need to junk what he called concept-fetishism; (2) the importance of comparative research beyond purely Anglo-American settings; (3) the importance of social movements and their media; (4) the urgency of rescuing interpersonal and group communication research from scientism; (5) the priority we need to give to research targeted to progressive policy-formulation; (6) the crucial significance of a human rights focus in research; (7) the neglected significance of religion; and (8) the tabu topic of social class.

At the end of his speech, he added a ninth point, namely the need of communication scholars to be more active in issues of contemporary concern. He concluded his talk by suggesting that the adoption of some of his suggestions and the taking to heart of some of his criticisms “would help realize the promise contained in the very focus of our field and would preserve us from being just another academic specialty carving out its little niche.”

Other conference events included the debut of a new special session that focused on the issues and problems of administering communication programs. Gary Gumpert acted as facilitator and gathered together a group of deans and chairs, each chosen for their varying experience and tales to tell. Participants



included Bruce A. Austin, Rochester Institute of Technology, George L. Back and Susan J. Drucker, Hofstra University, Harvey Jassem, University of Hartford, Teri Harrison, State University of NY at Albany, Rudy Pugliese, Rochester Institute of Technology, Stuart Sigman, Emerson College, Carol Wilder, New School University. In the session, there was a lively and engaging discussion where “Administrators Talk to Administrators,” and “Administrators Answer Non-Administrators,” in a round-table discussion format that included questions and comments from the audience.

Many attendees also enjoyed the First Annual NYSCA Film Festival as well as the annual banquet. The after-dinner Keynote address was given by New School University Visiting faculty member and Pulitzer Prize winning photojournalism David Turnley. His NYSCA address was entitled “Reflections of a War Photographer” and included presentation and discussion of some of his photographs taken during his work as a CNN photographer/correspondent in the recent Iraq war.

In all, the 61st conference was a noted success. Attendees enjoyed our new location and found the innovations in the program to be welcome changes. Most importantly, everyone left the conference invigorated with a renewed sense of the relevance and centrality of the work we do.

photos by susan jacobson



The Role of a State Association

by Marie Garland

Questions about the role of a state association have been circulating with increasing frequency among NYSCA members in the recent past. When an inverse relationship exists between available funds for professional development and memberships and the number of potential opportunities, why would someone choose to support the community of scholars closest to home? There are three worthy answers to this question.

First and foremost, the NYSCA annual meeting has always provided the kind of collegial atmosphere that encourages true dialogue and productive exchange about ideas. Lest we forget, in our role as scholars we never work in isolation. "Science," Deetz (2000) reminds us, "is better seen as a three part relation among a researcher with methods and concepts, a changing, indeterminate world, and a community from which problems and concepts are drawn and challenged" (p.735). While I enjoy my participation at national and regional conferences, I find the opportunities for intellectual engagement in a topic area to be limited within the ever-rushed and overscheduled days that fill up just about the time I book my flight. In contrast, opportunities for continued conversation over a meal or a drink are built into the NYSCA experience.

In addition to building in "decompress" time, the conference program at NYSCA provides opportunities to gather resources and explore strategies relevant to the many other roles we play in the academy. As such, the program also frequently incorporates sessions on topic areas of interest to a variety of communication teachers, administrators, and those of us to traverse the boundary between academia and the corporate, non-profit, or government-sector worlds. Some of us in particular – members of the academy's contingent workforce (a.k.a. adjuncts) could benefit immensely from such sessions. In their research, Feldman and Turnley (2001) found that adjuncts "remain in their jobs because of attachment to [their] professions" (p. 12) although positions that are perceived as unchallenging result too frequently in a loss of interest in a career in academe. Active participation in NYSCA provides both the challenge and the opportunity for attachment needed to avoid the perception that such positions are dead end jobs.

A state association like NYSCA could be – should be – much more than the sponsor

of an annual conference, however. Our collective voice can make a difference in the policies and decisions that affect our campuses statewide. Indeed, NYSCA has an important role to play in an era of decreasing funding for state-supported institutions and state-supported financial aid. Though we may not all agree with the counter-tactics Stanley Fish proposes in his recent editorial in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, we recognize that this is a role that is unlikely to disappear anytime soon. As Fish (2004) argues, "the attraction that bashing the academy has for politicians and others has a source in the anti-intellectualism that has always been a part of American life" (p. C1) and continues to be so. Providing an avenue for the collective response to these conditions – as scholars in general and as communication scholars in particular – is one of the most important functions of our association.

In the next few years, NYSCA must continue to pursue these trajectories. We must take advantage of opportunities to build on the breadth and depth of our conference experience. Toward that end, I encourage you to submit your ideas for the program for the 2004 convention (see related article). But we must also seek out new opportunities to make our voices heard as champions of high-quality communication education experiences in New York State. Thus, I encourage you to join the association, correspond with the executive council, and attend the annual business meeting (held in conjunction with the conference). Only through your active participation will the association be enabled to enhance our message to our government and other regulatory bodies.

References:

Deetz, S.(2000). Putting the community into organizational science: Exploring the construction of knowledge claims. *Organization Science*, 11, pp. 732-738.

Feldman, D. & Turnley, W. (2001). A field study of adjunct faculty: The impact of career stage on reactions to non-tenure-track jobs. *Journal of Career Development*, 28, p. 1-16.

Fish, S. (5 March 2004). Make 'em cry. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. C1.

2003 NYSCA Executive Council & General Meetings Summary Oct. 25–27, 2003

The Executive Council held two meetings during the 2003 conference. At the first meeting on Saturday morning, Oct. 25, the committee reviewed the slate of candidates and procedures for conducting the elections that would be held later that day. As its second item of business, the Council decided to instate the Neil Postman Mentor Award. It was decided that the award recipient would be chosen by past presidents of the association. The Council also emphasized the need to maintain the John Wilson Fellow Award and as a regular part of the NYSCA program. Council debated and approved a motion to publish the NYSCA *Proceedings* in on-line format.

On Sunday morning, Oct. 26, the new Executive Committee met and discussed ideas for improving outreach and increasing membership. Edward Lenert reported on the appointment of Joseph Coppolino as the Archivist for the Association. The spring 2004 meeting was scheduled for Friday evening at the Eastern Communication Association conference.

The general assembly held its annual meeting on Saturday evening, Oct. 25. After President Carol Wilder offered greetings and expressed gratitude to the conference planners and recognized Past Presidents in attendance, Vice President Edward Lenert presented the student award for Best Paper to Shelly Espesito for her paper "Fathers in Parenting Magazine: A Content Analysis." The general election was held and the following positions were established:

Vice-President Elect: Sue Barnes

Members-at-Large: Lance Strate, Sandra Sarkela

Recording Secretary: Bilge Yesil

Director of New Media: Elizabeth LeDoux

Student Representative: Jeffrey Milliner

Nominating Committee: Rudy Pugliese

Director of Public Relations & Advertising: Andrea Romo

Editor-in-Chief: Thom Gencarelli

Carol Wilder, acting on behalf of the Executive Council, appointed the following positions: Executive Secretary: Sue Collins (to fill out the remainder of an established term); Editor of the *Proceedings*: Paul Grossweiler; Editor of *NYSCA Reports*: Ari Kissiloff.

Edward Lenert assumed the gavel and adjourned the general meeting.

NYSCA Remembers Neil Postman (1931-2003)

Lance Strate

On Oct. 6, 2003, NYSCA lost one of its most beloved members, Neil Postman. A native New Yorker, Neil grew up in Brooklyn and later settled in Queens. He attended SUNY Fredonia as an undergraduate, and completed his graduate work at Columbia University's Teachers College. Postman moved west for his first teaching post in 1958, perhaps in search of his cherished Brooklyn Dodgers, but he and his wife Shelley kept their clocks set to Eastern Standard Time the entire year he was teaching at San Francisco State College. He returned to New York to join the faculty at New York University in 1959, and never looked back. At NYU he founded the Graduate Program in Media Ecology, served as chair of the Department of Culture and Communication, earned the highest possible academic rank of University Professor, and was made the first Paulette Goddard Chair of Media Ecology. He is remembered as the author of 23 books, a celebrated public intellectual and gifted public speaker, an educational leader and innovator, a distinguished teacher and mentor, and as a good colleague and friend. But we at NYSCA remember him as one of our own.

Neil Postman loved NYSCA. Neil loved the small scale of the organization and intimate setting of its annual meetings. Neil loved the intellectual atmosphere, group cohesion, and easy interaction that NYSCA fostered. He was happy to give of himself to NYSCA, serving as a keynote speaker at several of our conferences, publishing in our journals, and receiving NYSCA's highest honor in being named one of the four initial John F. Wilson Fellows, along with Deborah Borisoff, Gary Gumpert, and Dan Hahn. But he never came to NYSCA seeking accolades or admiration, or looking to occupy the center stage. He came to watch his students present their papers, to get to know other students and professors in our field, and to support his many colleagues and students who took up leadership positions in NYSCA. And when NYSCA hit upon hard times during the mid-90s, Neil came to the rescue, and may very well have kept our association from going under.

At our annual conference on October 24–26, we held a heartfelt memorial to Neil Postman, with numerous NYSCA members sharing their reflections and memories. We were honored to have Neil's wife Shelley, one of his sons, Andrew, and his daughter Madeline present with us. And at the memorial we formally announced that NYSCA's Executive Council had approved a proposal by Susan Drucker to establish an annual Neil Postman Mentor Award. We believe this is a fitting memorial to the man who was a mentor to so many NYSCA members, both formally and informally, and who was in many ways a mentor to the organization itself. The award will be administered by NYSCA's Past Presidents, who will meet each year at our annual conference to choose the next Neil Postman Mentor. The decision will be announced at that year's meeting, and the Award will be presented at the following year's conference. This process will begin this fall at our 62nd annual meeting.

Neil Postman never forgot NYSCA, and now NYSCA will never forget Neil Postman.



photo by robert francos

Call for Papers for Online Proceedings of the 2003 NYSCA Annual Conference

Research papers presented at the "The State of Communication", 61st Annual Conference of the New York State Communication Association, October 24–26, 2003, Hudson River Resort, are being accepted for review for the online conference proceedings.

Authors should send four (4) copies of the manuscript, no longer than 25 pages (including tables and figures), to :

Paul Grosswiler

420 Dunn Hall
Department of Communication and Journalism
University of Maine
Orono, ME 04469.

Manuscripts must conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed., 2001). Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to reprint copyrighted material.

Double space the entire manuscript, including title page, abstract, text, quotations, acknowledgments, references, appendixes, tables, figure captions, and footnotes. Each author as it is to appear in the journal, the current and complete mailing address, telephone, fax, and email address of each author.

Manuscripts must be postmarked by May 1, 2004.

This electronic publication will be available at www.nyscanet.org

John F. Wilson Fellowship Nominations

Nominations are invited for the John F. Wilson Fellowship of the New York State Communication Association. The Wilson Scholar Committee may, each year, award the Wilson Fellowship to a member of the New York State Communication Association who has established an exemplary record of scholarship and service to the Association. The fellowship carries the prize of life membership in the Association. To be considered for the award, nominees must: (1) Be members of NYSCA; (2) Have contributed a significant body of research; (3) Have a record of service to NYSCA. Each nomination should include a letter of nomination and current CV.

Deadline for nominations is September 1, 2004.

Nominations should be sent to:

Susan Drucker

Hofstra University
School of Communication
Dept. of Journalism/Mass Media Studies
Dempster Hall
Hempstead, New York, 11549
sphsjd@hofstra.edu

Call For Papers
62nd Annual Conference
October 15-17, 2004
Hudson Valley Resort & Spa, Kerhonkson, New York

**Navigating the Current:
Stability and Change in Research, Practice, and Program Administration**

**Types of
Submission
Sought:**

Completed papers, extended abstracts, and proposals for creative presentations, demonstration projects, workshops, master classes, and theme-based panels are welcome from members and nonmembers alike. Work related to the conference theme is encouraged, though work representing a wide range of topics within communication is welcomed.

**Submission
Requirements:**

Panel organizers should submit a statement describing the session topic, abstracts for each paper/presentation, and indication that all authors are willing to attend if the panel is accepted. Methodology for audience engagement for panels as well as for master classes, workshops, and demonstration or creative presentations should be described. Session content, scope or intended outcomes for master classes, workshops, and other non-standard formats should also be clearly described. Extended abstracts and/or completed papers should be prepared in such a way as to allow blind review. Extended abstracts should be marked as such. Note: Submissions directly related to the convention theme should be identified at the time of submission.

Deadline: May 15, 2004

All submissions must include a cover page with the author's/organizer's full name, affiliation (if applicable), e-mail address, and telephone number. Paper submissions preferred (three copies, please), though electronic submissions (MS Word format only) are acceptable. Send submissions to:

Dr. Marie Garland
NYSCA VP & Conference Planner
Department of Organizational Communication, Learning, and Design
Roy H. Park School of Communications
329 Park Hall
Ithaca College
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Conference Features:

Awards for Top Student Papers
Featured Keynote: Stanley Deetz, University of Colorado

For more information on the conference theme and other conference features, visit the Association's web site at www.nyscanet.org

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If you have any ideas for articles or topics you'd like to see represented, please make them known to akissiloff@ithaca.edu