

T e n n e s s e e COMMUNICATOR

A Newsletter Produced By The Tennessee Communication Association

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(615) 452-8600 Ext. 3781
www2.volstate.edu/tca



TCA 2009 Fall Conference Natchez Trace State Park September 11 & 12

What do experiencing scenic woodland views, catching up with treasured friends, making new friends, and learning exciting information about communication have in common? They are all in your future if you attend this year's Tennessee Communication Association's Fall Conference scheduled for September 11 and 12 at Natchez Trace State Park in Wildersville, Tennessee.

The theme for this year's conference is *Communication in the Modern World*. It is a fact that our society continually experiences new growth and development in the behaviors, customs, and methods utilized in the communication process. Communication in the modern world encompasses many forms ranging from face-to-face communication to more advanced communication methods that incorporate the use of many types of technology.

The 2009 TCA Conference will explore the

nature of communication in the modern world and how individuals utilize successful communication strategies in the exchange of messages and information.

Mark your calendars, and be a part of this wonderful annual tradition. Fall is a glorious time of year, and the many wooded acres and four lovely lakes found at Natchez Trace State Park will offer a beautiful backdrop for this year's conference. Don't miss out on the fun! See you there!

Natchez Trace State Park at 24845 Natchez Trace Road, located 12 miles south of exit 116 on I-40 between Nashville and Memphis. Please indicate that you are with TCA when making your reservation. Room prices are \$70 plus tax.

Reservation deadline is September 1. Please call the park at 1-800-250-8616 to make your reservation.

2008-2009 Officers

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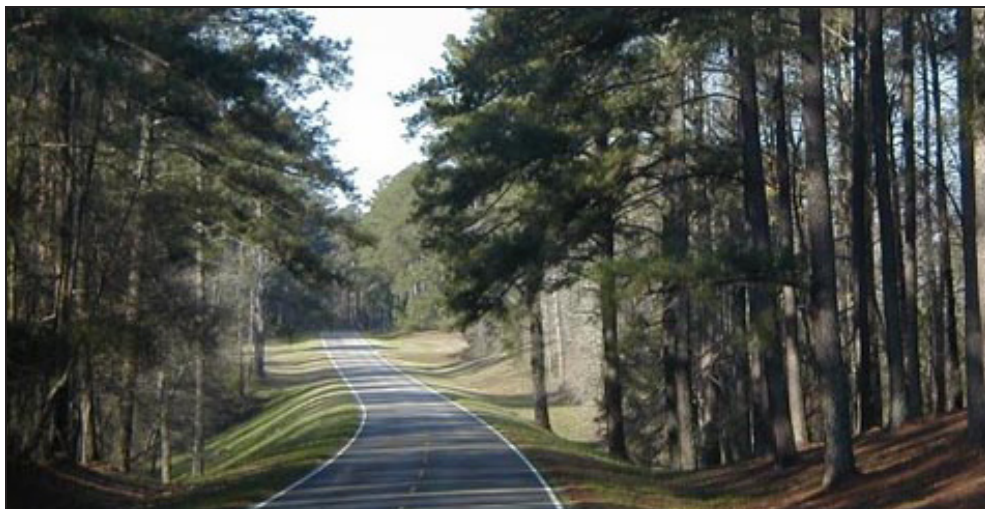
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Rhetoric and Public Address

Sandra Sarkela
University of Memphis
ssarkela@memphis.edu

Call for Papers for 2009 Fall Conference



The Tennessee Communication Association (TCA) invites colleagues from college, high school and professional ranks to attend and to participate in the fall 2009 conference, both as presenters and attendees. Students are especially encouraged to attend and present at the conference. This year's program theme is *Communication in the Modern World*. Our society continually experiences new growth and development in the behaviors, customs, and methods utilized in the communication process. Communication in the modern world encompasses many forms ranging from face-to-face communication to more advanced communication methods that incorporate the use of many types of technology. The 2009 TCA Conference will explore the nature of communication in the modern world and how individuals utilize successful communication strategies in the exchange of messages and information. We encourage submissions on a wide variety of interpretations of the theme. **Submission deadline is March 13, 2009 for professional papers and May 8, 2009 for student papers.** Proposals for presentations should include author's name, affiliation, e-mail address and phone number, a descriptive title for the presentation, and an abstract of 50 or fewer words. Representatives from TCA will examine the submissions for each interest area and develop 50-minute panels based on common threads. Electronic presentations are welcome. Please direct questions and submissions to the appropriate Interest Group Chair:

ARGUMENTATION & FORENSICS

Malcolm McAvoy, Walters State Community College, Malcolm.McAvoy@ws.edu

CORPORATE & ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Janet McCormick, Middle Tennessee State University, jmccormi@mtsu.edu

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Pam Gray, Austin Peay State University, grayp@apsu.edu

INTERPERSONAL & SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION

Chair: Kevin Trowbridge, Lee University, ktrowbridge@leeuniversity.edu

MASS COMMUNICATION INTEREST GROUP

Chris Blair, Union University, cblair@uu.edu

RHETORIC & PUBLIC ADDRESS

Sandra Sarkela, University of Memphis, ssarkela@memphis.edu

UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE STUDENT PAPERS

Greg Simerly, Middle Tennessee State University, gsimerly@mtsu.edu

A top undergraduate and a top graduate paper from each state association will be recognized.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I'm sure you've all heard or used the maxim about the dangers of trying to thank people for fear of leaving someone out. However, I will just have to take that risk trying to thank the groups and people who have helped to make the 2008 TCA/KCA conference a success.

I'd like to thank my fellow TCA officers for their constant help and support. Nothing would have been possible without the interest group chairs who really went the extra mile to work closely with their Kentucky counterparts to put together the joint programs. I also want to thank the individuals who make it possible for both Associations to stay in touch through the Web site and newsletters. I am grateful for the chairs and members of the nominating and awards committees who performed their duties so diligently, and want to recognize those who shared their expertise during panel discussions and presentations as well as those who attended the sessions and shared ideas.

In the coming year, we will face new challenges including the economic climate that affects everything we do. During this time of tighter budgets, it will be important to remember that TCA membership and our annual conference are some of the best bargains around for professional development.

Exciting ideas in the business meeting included suggestion to use the newsletter to expand and grow as professionals and continue to increase our membership. I challenge each and every member to make it a personal goal to work during the coming year to make sure that the Tennessee Communication Association remains a voice for our discipline, a vehicle for education and a vital means for sustaining a personal and professional community.

Debra S. Jones

TCA president and associate professor of speech
Chattanooga State Technical Community College

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 13, 2009

Professional papers for the 2009 conference are due

May 1, 2009

TCA Awards nominations are due

May 1, 2009

2009/10 officers will be elected

May 8, 2009

Student papers for the 2009 conference are due

September 1, 2009

Reservation and registration deadline for 2009 Fall Conference at Natchez Trace State Park

September 11 & 12, 2009

2009 Fall Conference at Natchez Trace State Park

September 2010 (date TBD)

2010 Fall Conference at MTSU

September 16 & 17, 2011 (New Date!)

KCA/TCA Joint Conference at Lake Barkley State Resort Park in Cadiz, Kentucky

TCA/KCA JOINT CONFERENCE AT LAKE BARKLEY NOW IN 2011



Conversations between KCA and TCA at the 2008 joint conference led us to realize that many members of both organizations would like to meet for a joint conference sooner than originally planned.

The Kentucky Communication Association has reserved Lake Barkley State Resort Park for a joint conference, September 16 & 17, 2011. We encourage our members to make plans now to attend this very special conference. We will keep you updated as plans come together.

AWARDS NOMINATIONS

Communication Educator of the Year

Communicator of the Year

Dorothy Norton Spirit of Service Award

Please e-mail your nominations to
Ralph Hillman
voicedoc@thebreathesystem.com

Awards forms are available at
www2.volstate.edu/tca

2008 TCA Awards

Dorothy Norton Spirit of Service Award

David Ellis Walker: A Man of Integrity

By Ralph Hillman
Professor emeritus, Middle Tennessee State University



David Walker of Middle Tennessee State University was a man of integrity with four life priorities: family, faith, work and professional affiliation.

For David, his family took priority over everything. He was a devoted husband, excellent father and committed to being there for those who loved him. When health issues began to dominate his family, he had the integrity to give those issues top billing and still continue to fill his other roles with energy and enthusiasm.

David was a preacher, who really enjoyed the challenge of preparing and delivering a weekly sermon. He also lived his faith with integrity. His family took in young people who did not have a home. He did not swear, smoke, drink, or gamble. His beliefs kept him from attending the now-traditional-Memphis-Friday-night-party. His faith was

sufficient for him, a man of integrity.

David Walker spent his professional career working to develop and be a part of a professional department that offered the best possible speech education opportunities for students. His commitment to his profession was consuming. He loved teaching and enjoyed doing research. His reputation as a problem-solver for students preceded him.

The Dorothy Norton Spirit of Service Award is intended for a professional who offers the best possible enrichment activities for teaching professionals in his department and other teaching professionals across the state of Tennessee.

Like Dorothy, David was tireless in his efforts to make TCA the best it could be. His leadership efforts were executed with quiet strength, never seeking the publicity focus. He was more concerned about the results and the active participation of speech professionals than about his own accolades.

That is who David was. He was selfless and did it all with integrity.

Communication Educator of the Year

Donald Page: A Class Act

By Ralph Hillman
Professor emeritus, Middle Tennessee State University

When I run into someone who knows a person I know and thinks that person has had an awesome impact on their life, I feel like sharing the good news.

Talking to a former student of Donald Page, professor at Tennessee State University, I learned a great deal about Donald's skills as a "communication educator."

The student first met Donald as advisor. The studies program outlined was clear, achievable and exactly what the student wanted. Later, the course of study needed to be changed to allow for maximum learning. The ease with which that change was accomplished absolutely amazed the student. The student said that there were many



others whom Donald had helped to develop a better sequence of classes.

The student seemed very pleased that the classroom material was more than what was “in the book” and

that the personal information provided was evidence of a broad understanding

by the instructor. The student was provided with chances to learn and grow in lots of situations outside the classroom as well as with projects that were part of the classroom material. Donald led the way in making these learning opportunities, internships and first job opportunities available to all of the students who came to see him.

Donald is a class act as a communication educator, and always willing to provide his expertise and insight for TCA projects.

Communicator of the Year

Steve Cohen

By Richard Ranta
Dean, College of Communication and Fine Arts
University of Memphis

The Communicator of the Year award is traditionally given to any person who by virtue, service, or performance, has contributed substantially to the principles of communication in Tennessee.

“Congressman Cohen is deserving of the TCA award for at least three reasons,” Richard Ranta says. “While in the Tennessee State Senate, he was for almost 20 years the driving force behind creating the lottery, which now funds higher education “Hope” scholarships. New to the U.S. Congress, he was able to persuade the House of Representatives to pass the apology for slavery. Most recently, he not only withstood a racially divisive, anti-Semitic opposition campaign in the primary election, but also won the Democratic nomination by an almost four to one margin. All of these examples show how effective Congressman Cohen has been and continues to be as a communicator.”

Congressman Steve Cohen is a fourth-generation Memphian who has dedicated his life to public service. During his term as a Shelby County Commissioner, Congressman Cohen cast one of the essential votes for the

creation of The Med. His 24 years in the Tennessee State Senate provided a record of passionate and unselfish service that was unparalleled. Cohen has a reputation for standing up and speaking out on important issues and has been called the father of the Tennessee Lottery. Since the inception of the Tennessee



Richard Ranta (l.) presents Congressman Steve Cohen with TCA's Communicator of the Year Award

Education Lottery Scholarship program in 2004, over \$800 million has gone to students continuing their education at the college level. As a State Senator, Congressman Cohen fought for nearly twenty years before the State Lottery was established. Countless students now benefit from his tireless efforts to provide Tennesseans with access to affordable, quality, post-secondary education.

STUDENT PAPER WINNERS

Top Graduate Student Paper

Lori Stephens
Austin Peay State University

Top Undergraduate Student Paper

Bailey Morgan
Walters State Community College

Fundamentals of Speech Communication in Action

By Jennifer Pitts
Volunteer State Community College



A lot of folks on Volunteer State's campus have been asking the question: How is ditch-digging relevant to a communication class? The answer is Service-Learning. Last semester, seventy students from my Fundamentals of Communication classes partnered with Friends of Bledsoe Creek State Park in Gallatin, Tennessee, to help the State Park solve a storm water drainage problem.

Service-Learning, according to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, "combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content."

One student described the Service-Learning project as "fundamentals of speech communication in action." Another student said, "When I registered for this class, I figured we would sit in class every day, listen to lectures, and then be forced to speak in front of people we barely knew. Instead, we were given a problem, asked to use our tools of communication to brainstorm effective solutions, and then implement those [solutions] physically."

The assignment was two-fold: the "service part" and the "learning part." Students were required to put in five hours of service at the park, and were not eligible to earn points for the "learning part" until they completed the five hour service requirement.

The "service part" of the project was ambitious, challenging, and at times overwhelming. The students focused their efforts on the problem of erosion around a picnic area and flooding of the surrounding sidewalks. Redirecting the flow of water

involved digging drainage ditches, removing large rocks, unbending crushed culvert pipes, placing a silt fence, lining ditches with rock, reseeding, and spreading erosion control blankets. The most challenging part of the job included tunneling under a sidewalk to place a drainage pipe.

During the course of researching ways to dig ditches, students became aware of the possible negative environmental effects of their well-intended actions. Students contacted Ensafe, an environmentally conscious engineering and consulting firm, for advice. A week later, students were surprised to receive a \$250 donation from the firm. The money provided work gloves for every student, grass seed, straw, silt fencing material, and gas money for students who drove their own vehicles to pick up supplies and donations.

Students met learning objectives of the course by working in groups to solve the problem. Each class had three teams: service, support, and publicity. They researched the problem, gave speeches presenting solutions to the community partner, organized work days and car pools on the class wiki, broadcast public service announcements and organized a party. Each student also reflected on his/her experience through various media: blogs, essays, video/photo journals, cartoons. One student even published an article in a state conservation magazine.

Rather than asking why communication students are digging ditches, perhaps we should ask, "Why not?"

Project wiki
<http://pittsservicelearning.wetpaint.com/>

Student's blog:
<http://rcampbell11servicelearningreflections.blogspot.com/>

Jennifer Pitts' blog:
<http://jpitts.edublogs.org/>

Michael Leff Elected President of the Rhetoric Society of America



Michael Leff, chair of the Department of Communication at the University of Memphis, will become president of the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) this summer. The RSA was organized in 1968, and the majority of its members come from departments of communication or English, but disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, history, political science, and sociology are also represented.

The Society publishes the journal, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. RSA is a member of the Alliance of Rhetoric Societies and recently has been admitted to the American Council of Learned Societies. In this interview, Michael Leff tells us about his new role and about the Rhetoric Society and its functions.

Q. Do you have any specific goals as the Society's new president?

A. My first objective is to focus on the 2010 biennial convention in Minneapolis. Another major issue has to do with the growth of RSA; it has nearly tripled its membership during the past decade—how do you sustain the culture and purposes of what was a relatively small and friendly group when it evolves into something much larger? Finally, I would like to encourage greater

interaction between our Society and similar organizations in other parts of the world. As rhetorical studies have gained momentum, international interest has increased rapidly.

Q. When and why did you become a member of the Rhetoric Society?

A. I became a member more than thirty years ago. It was a small organization then, and it offered the only venue for meeting others who studied rhetoric but were not in a department of communication, or of speech, as it was then called. RSA serves a unique purpose because there is no other place where people interested in rhetoric can converge and talk about mutual interests.

Q. Rhetoric often carries with it a negative connotation, and many people are confused about its status as an academic subject.

Could you clarify what you and members of RSA mean by "rhetoric"?

A. Some of the common definitions of rhetoric are: the art of persuasion, the art of discovering the available means of persuasion, the study and practice of persuasion in civic affairs, the art of adapting discourse to its end, the effort to influence those addressed by modifying or strengthening their representations of the surrounding world, and the study and practice of symbolic inducement. In the most narrow and traditional sense, rhetoric has to do with persuasion about public or civic concerns, and the most obvious examples of its use would be in political speeches or written polemics. The scope of rhetoric, however, has been extended to include almost every mode of communication, such as the rhetoric of paintings and illustrations, of ritual performances, of public monuments, of musical compositions, of novels and poems, of documentary and fiction films, and—more recently—of digital messages. Perhaps the common denominator here is concern about the way that symbol systems influence

Continued on page 8

human thought and action. It is important to understand that rhetoric is a mutable concept that changes as it is conceived for different purposes and applied to different objects.

Q. When did you first become interested in rhetorical studies and what led to devote your career to the study of rhetoric and public address?

A. As an undergraduate, I was on the debate team, and, in part because of that, I took a course in argumentation. My debate coach and argumentation instructor, Forbes Hill, was also a specialist in classical rhetoric. One of the main attractions for me was the constructively ambiguous status of rhetorical studies. Rhetoric and public address can be approached as a kind of academic discipline, but it also almost necessarily forces consideration of other disciplinary domains—history, psychology, logic, political science, and the like. I thought of rhetoric

as both disciplinary and interdisciplinary. This combination of tidiness and messiness intrigued me from the moment I recognized it. Rhetoric also involves an organic connection between teaching and research. To teach rhetoric requires mastery of an academic body of knowledge but it also entails application and adaptation of such knowledge in order to work with students learning how to speak, persuade, and argue. And the process also works in the other direction, since experience in the classroom teaches the rhetorician important lessons about how practice informs theory. This position at the intersection between the practice of teaching and contemplation of a subject makes rhetoric special for me, makes it a unique place in the modern research university where it is possible to be a research scholar and a teacher at the same time and without suffering from a divided professional psyche.

Memphis City School Debate Teams Held Inaugural Championship Tournament at U of M

More than 100 students from 15 Memphis high schools came to the University of Memphis in February to compete in the Memphis Urban Debate League's (MUDL) Inaugural City Championship Tournament. The tournament is a collaboration of MUDL, the U of M's Department of Communication, the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues (NAUDL) and several sponsoring community partners.

The top team, Whitehaven High School's Ashley Ray and Brooke Smith, won NAUDL's all-expenses paid trip to compete in the Chase Urban Debate National Championship in Chicago in April.

After being absent from Memphis City Schools for the past 40 years, debate returned to Memphis City Schools this past summer, largely due to the effort of Jim Sdoia, president of the Memphis Urban Debate League Advisory Board. "When I think about my time in high school, I can

name two things from that time that have helped me tremendously in my professional career," Sdoia remembers. "I took a speed reading class, and I was part of a debate team."

In 2007, with the help of NAUDL, and the support of Memphis City Schools, the MUDL began its inaugural season with a Summer Debate Institute in July 2008. Since then the League has held five tournaments, six coaches' seminars, and student workshops, as well as several judges' training sessions. The Memphis League plans to add five new schools per year until all Memphis City High Schools are part of the program.

"Debate leagues have proven to increase literacy scores, improve grade-point averages and graduation rates, and generate high college matriculation rates, and we hope to make an impact in all these areas for Memphis City School students," Sdoia says.

TCA Minutes from September 13, 2008

President Greg Simerly called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. on Saturday, September 13, 2008, at Montgomery Bell State Park. The meeting was attended by 11 members. Thanks were expressed to President-Elect Debra Jones for her outstanding work of planning the joint conference. The minutes of the 2007 meeting were approved., and the financial report was presented and accepted.

Membership/Conference Attendance/Schools Represented: 44 present at conference; 48 total members; 11 schools represented at conference: Middle Tennessee State, University of Tennessee, University of Memphis, Columbia State, Volunteer State, Tennessee Tech, Union, UT at Martin, Walters State, Freed-Hardeman, Austin Peay

President's Remarks: We miss Dortha Norton and David Walker. Our sense of community is growing.

TCA Awards (presented at the luncheon)

President	Greg Simerly
Communication Educator	Donald Page
Communicator of the Year	Steve Cohen
Dortha Norton Spirit of Service	David Walker
Graduate Student Paper	Lori Stephens, Austin Peay
Undergraduate Student Paper	Bailey Morgan, Walters State

Introduction of 2008/09 TCA Officers and Interest Group Chairs:

President: Debra Jones, Chattanooga State
President-Elect: Teresa Collard, UT at Martin
Executive Director: Judi Truitt, Volunteer State
Past President: Greg Simerly, Middle TN
Newsletter Editor: Richard Ranta, University of Memphis
Webmaster: David Warner, Volunteer State
Argumentation/Forensics: Malcolm McAvoy, Walters State
Corporate/Organizational: Janet McCormick, Middle TN
Curriculum/Instruction: Pam Gray, Austin Peay
Interpersonal/Small Group: Kevin Trowbridge, Lee
Mass Communication: Chris Blair, Union
Rhetoric and Public Address: Sandra Sarkela, University of Memphis

Old Business

Regional Membership Chairs are asked to continue recruiting new members. We will still offer the first year's membership free. Chairs are Abby Lackey (West TN), Arthur Hunt (Middle TN), Taylor Richard (East TN). Action: Greg Simerly and Judi Truitt will draft a recommendation regarding incentives for new members.

New Business

Motion to have student papers submitted by the first Friday in May: Approved.

Faculty are asked to be proactive in soliciting papers, and to have students sign a contract to attend the fall conference. A work team was established to present a recommendation on a Student Mentor Award, on recognizing schools that bring students and faculty of students receiving top paper awards. Action: Greg Simerly, Linda Lyle, and Russell Church will serve on this team.

A motion was made to plan conference locations at least four years ahead. Approved.

2009	Natchez Trace State Park September 11-12
2010	MTSU
2011	Falls Creek Falls
*2012	TBA (hosted by KCA)

***Note: The 2012 KCA/TCA joint conference has been moved to 2011.**

A motion was made to keep the conference registration fee at \$50, which barely covers the costs of the conferences. Approved.

A motion was made to solicit and publish research briefs. Approved.

Action: Greg Simerly will appoint someone to issue a call twice a year, and to receive these papers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55.

NOTE: 2008 Conference fees and membership dues: \$2,615.19; Conference expenses: \$2,864.55; Difference: -\$249.36

2009/10 TCA Membership Form

Name: _____

Institution Represented: _____

Full-time Faculty ☐ Adjunct Faculty ☐ Retired Faculty ☐ Student ☐ Independent ☐

Preferred Mailing Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

(The TCA newsletter will be send electronically!)

Phone: (work) _____ (home) _____

Membership:

New Member (first year free) ☐

Student \$5 ☐

Regular \$25 ☐

Adjunct Faculty \$10 ☐

Sustaining \$65 with free conference registration ☐

Emeritus, no fee ☐

Must be retired from active service and have been a regular member for 15 continuous years.

The TCA membership year runs from fall conference to fall conference!

2009 Conference Registration

- ☐ Yes, I will attend the 2009 TCA conference, and the \$50 conference fee for this year is enclosed.
- ☐ Yes, I will attend the 2009 TCA conference. I am a student presenter and don't have to pay a conference fee.
- ☐ Yes, I will attend the Friday evening dinner.
- ☐ Yes, I will attend the Saturday breakfast business meeting.
- ☐ Yes, I will attend the Saturday TCA/KCA awards luncheon.

Note: The registration fee will not be reduced if you don't attend meal events.

Please make checks payable to: Tennessee Communication Association

Mail check and completed form(s) to:

Judi Truitt, TCA Executive Director
Volunteer State Community College
123 Ramer Administration Bldg.
1480 Nashville Pike
Gallatin, TN 37066

For more information contact:
(615) 452-8600 Ext. 3781
or e-mail judi.truitt@volstate.edu

