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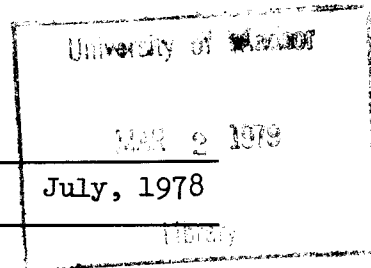
informal logic

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vol. i, no. 1 eds., Ralph H. Johnson & J. Anthony Blair

July, 1978

FROM THE EDITORS

We welcome our readers to this, the first number of the Informal Logic Newsletter. We think it in order to say a brief word about how this newsletter came into existence and what its purposes are.

The need for such a publication became apparent during the course of the Symposium on Informal Logic, held at the University of Windsor, June 26-28, 1978. (For a report on the Symposium, see below.) Those who attended agreed that there was an urgent need for a publication of sort sort in which people engaged in research aabout and/or the teaching of informal logic could exchange ideas and information. A newsletter seemed to be the quickest and surest way to meet that need, and we hope it will succeed. We also hope it will quicken the interest of others who are beginning to take note of this burgeoning area of logic.

However, as we found out at the Windsor Symposium, informal logic means many things to many people. Let us then declare our conception of it. For the time being, we shall use this term to denote a wide spectrum of interests and questions, whose only common link may appear to be that they do not readily lend themselves to treatment in the pages of The Journal of Symbolic Logic. More positively, we think of informal logic as covering the gamut of theoretical and practical issues that come into focus when one examines closely, from a normative viewpoint, the reasoning that people actually engage in. Subtract from this the exclusively formal issues and what remains is informal logic. Thus our conception is very broad and liberal, and covers everything from theoretical issues (theory of fallacy and argument) to practical ones (such as how best to display the structure of ordinary arguments) to pedagogical questions (how to design critical thinking courses; what sorts of material to use).

The features to be included in the newsletter follow naturally, we believe, from its purposes. We want to include as much pertinent information as we can: news of upcoming conferences, symposia, recent publications, etc. In this issue, we include a list of those who attended the Windsor Symposium and their interests; we want to update that list from time to time. We also intend to include book reviews, notes, and discussions carried on by our readers. Tips and ideas about how to teach such courses as informal logic seem also natural for inclusion. Most important, we want to be useful. So we plan to be flexible: items will be added, or dropped, to meet demand and interest.

All of this means, of course, that this will (we hope) be largely a reader-written newsletter. The information and notes that will make it successful will come from you, the readers. Our job will be mainly that of compiling and distributing. So let us hear from you: how did you like this first number? what ideas do you have about what should go into the newsletter? what items for inclusion in the next number do you have? The deadline for these is: October 15, 1978.

RHJ
JAB

July, 1978

NEWSLETTER DATA

The Informal Logic Newsletter is published by the editors, Profs. Ralph H. Johnson and J. Anthony Blair. Address all communications to:

The Editors
Informal Logic Newsletter
Department of Philosophy
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4
Canada

Subscriptions. Annual subscriptions are \$4 for individuals and \$8 for institutions. Make cheques payable to: Informal Logic Newsletter. The newsletter will be published a minimum of three times a year, normally in June, November and February. All subscriptions begin with the July number; late subscribers receive the year's back issues. Additional numbers will be published as material warrants.

TEACHING PROJECT

We have received the following item from Thomas N. Tomko, Project Administrator of the Illinois Critical Thinking Project:

The Illinois Critical Thinking Project is concerned with research, testing, and the development of teaching materials in the area of logic and critical thinking. At present the group consists of Robert Ennis, Stephen Norris, Thomas Tomko and Frances Wagner.

Currently the Project is engaged in two major activities funded, in part, by the Graduate College and the College of Education at the University of Illinois: 1) the development of teaching materials for a high school level course in logic and critical thinking and 2) the development of several aspect-specific critical thinking tests. . . .

Another Project activity during the 1977-78 academic year was the preparation of a review of attempts to teach critical thinking

in secondary schools. This report, entitled Teaching Logic in Grades 7-12: A Literature Review, was written by Bruce Stewart and is available from the Illinois Critical Thinking Project.

We will try to keep you informed of the progress being made on the projects mentioned above. Comments, suggestions, and questions can be addressed to:

Illinois Critical Thinking Project
Bureau of Educational Research
188 Education Building
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801

The Illinois Project publishes a newsletter (the above excerpts are quoted from the June, 1978 number) and would like to hear the comments and suggestions of those who read it. If you would like your name placed on their mailing list, or if you can suggest additional interested persons to them, write to the above address.

PASSAGE FOR ANALYSIS

We put the following passage on our freshman Applied Logic course final examination last year, with interesting and varied results. We thought it would be interesting to have any of our readers who wanted to take a stab at giving a critique of this passage, using whatever method you choose. In the next issue of the newsletter we will publish our own critique, along with alternative(s) supplied by readers. And if this feature has definite appeal, it would be easy enough to keep it on as a regular item in the newsletter.

Background: In the last year or so there have been many allegations and 'revelations' about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and their activities. Against this background, the following letter was addressed to the Windsor Star (April, 1978) from T. P.:

Sir: For the past several months, we have been subjected to numerous articles and editorials castigating the RCMP for "searching premises under open warrant, wiretapping, opening mail, breaking and entering, and arson."

I have no doubt that most Canadians appreciate that these actions are necessary if we are to maintain our freedom and democratic way of life. Rest assured that if our security forces are denied the basic tools of their profession, we will soon be taken over by a totalitarian regime.

And once that happens, the police would be empowered to search our premises any time under an "open" warrant, tap our telephones, open our mail, break into our homes and offices, and burn our property. Surely no one would want to hamper the splendid work of the RCMP in saving us from such tyranny.

REMINDER:

The next number of the newsletter will be issued in mid-November. The deadline for all those who have items for inclusion is: October 15, 1978.