

informal logic

newsletter

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looking back, and ahead

With the mailing of this combined issue (ii.3/Suppl.), The Informal Logic Newsletter completes its second year of publication. Indeed, it was just two years ago that the Symposium on Informal Logic, which provided the impetus for the Newsletter, was held at the University of Windsor. Our readers will, we trust, be pleased to learn that the proceedings of that symposium have just been published under the title: Informal Logic: The First International Symposium (for details, see inside).

As we look back on these first two years, the editors are pleased with the growth of ILN and the support it has enjoyed. The Newsletter is solvent (no small achievement in these days of rising costs) and has been generally well-received. Our list of subscribers has grown to some 200 individuals and institutions scattered throughout Canada, the United States, Europe, and even Asia (we had a letter of inquiry from someone in the People's Republic of China). The format has undergone several changes, all designed to make ILN more attractive visually. To judge by readers' reactions, we think we've succeeded in that respect. Publication dates have been somewhat irregular, we must confess, causing some subscribers to wonder whether they'd been forgotten! They hadn't been; we were just a bit slow getting down to cases. This year also witnessed the introduction of two new features: articles and critical reviews. The response, particularly to the articles, has been excellent (more on

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that below), and we hope to continue to expand these features in the years to come. On the whole, then, we believe that the Newsletter has helped to promote the development of informal logic as an important and worthy enterprise and to that extent begun to realize the goal we had in mind when we began publication.

As we look to the future, we hope to be able to continue publication of challenging articles on topics of interest to our readers and to follow the dialectic wherever it may lead. We plan more critical reviews of the burgeoning number of texts in this area and hope that we can count on our readers to submit such reviews for publication. Next year, we plan to publish an updated list of people doing research in this area, as well as an update of the bibliography we did for the Windsor Symposium. As well, we will continue to circulate information about conferences, related areas of inquiry, and matters of interest to our subscribers.

One final point. If the growth of informal logic is to continue, if informal logic is to become an ever more vital area of inquiry and research, then it is crucial that those involved in this enterprise address themselves to important conceptual and theoretical issues. On this point, we can not do better than to quote the words which the author of a recent text wrote to us: "Like more and more people nowadays, I've come to regard informal logic as a research field, not just a body of received or trivial doctrine to be taught to undergraduates." Others have seconded that thought. It is our hope that the Newsletter will be a prominent forum for the publication of such research and the development of new ideas.

this issue

With the publication of Perry Weddle's article, "Inductive, Deductive," (ILN, ii.1), we apparently struck a nerve. In the last issue (ii.2) Sam Fohr presented his arguments on behalf of retaining the distinction. In this issue, Trudy Govier responds to Fohr's piece, while David Hitchcock presents his own arguments for preserving the distinction. It seems clear that this is a topic about which a number of our readers have strong views. Although we do not intend to prolong the debate unduly, neither do we intend to cut it off before it has reached fruition. Indeed, when one thinks of the cardinal role that the inductive-deductive distinction has played in the development of contemporary logic, and the ramifications of that prominence, it seems clear that the time has come for measured and sustained reflection. That, at any rate, has been our aim in publishing Weddle's article and the responses.

In addition to the other material in this issue, we have added an Example Supplement, so that our readers may have this material in hand as they plan their courses for next year.

acknowledgements

Even so modest an enterprise as this Newsletter depends upon the behind-the-scenes help of several people. These people have hitherto been unacknowledged, and it is a pleasure now to correct this oversight.

Mrs. Violet Smith finds herself inundated with Newsletter manuscripts, conference reports, books-received lists, and a dozen other odds and ends--out of the blue, a week or two before the Newsletter is scheduled, in the arbitrary minds of the editors, to appear. We ask her to set everything else aside, to type and retype material (as we change our minds about it), to stand ready to type last-minute insertions. We do this with the "hurry up and rush" impatience of procrastinators who have suddenly made a belated decision to act. In the face of this sort of unreasonable pressure, Vi Smith responds with unfailing courtesy, unbelievable patience, and unmatched accuracy. To her we owe the greatest debt of gratitude.

To our Managing Editor, our colleague Prof. Peter Wilkinson, we owe great thanks for taking on the tedious but crucial task of keeping in touch with subscriptions, corresponding with subscribers, watching expenses, overseeing distribution, and as Head of our Department, directing the resources of the staff to our support.

We thank Mrs. Irene Antaya, our Department Secretary, for pitching in to help with address labels and envelope stuffing, as well as numerous miscellaneous tasks we ask her to do in connection with the Newsletter throughout the year.

And finally, though far from least, we thank our wives--June and Maggie--for tolerating and in the end forgiving us for the time and patience we take from our families, especially during the fortnight or so during which the Newsletter is assembled and pasted up thrice or more each year.

To the extent that our readers welcome the Newsletter, these debts of gratitude fall upon you as well. On your behalf as well as our own, therefore, we thank all these good people who share in its production.

Special thanks for assistance in the production and distribution of this issue of ILN to: Violet Smith, Irene Antaya, Peter F. Wilkinson, Robert C. Pinto.