NEWSFORUM


The themes of "consolidation" and "initiation" accurately describe the varied activities which the editors have undertaken in the twelve months since their appointment in June of 1987. We hope these themes reflect the impression which the Editorial Board and our readers have formed of the Canadian Journal of Communication's three most recent issues, the first of our editorial efforts.

Examples of consolidating activities are the regular quarterly publication of our journal in February, May, September, and December; and the development of strategies for eradicating the twelve month publication hiatus which had developed in previous years. To fill this gap the Board approved the publication of a series of Special Issues which will appear between now and 1990. The first of these specials entitled "Canadian Communication Studies: A Discipline in Transition?" and came out in December 1987. In fulfillment of previous commitments, the issue was sent to current CCA member subscribers free of cost. Others can order it directly from the University of Calgary Press for $10.00. The articles by Roger de la Garde, Liora Salter, Richard D. French and John Meisel lend themselves to classroom use and will hopefully be ordered in multiple copies. For December 1988 a Special Issue on "Communications and Martial Law" will be guest-edited by Robert Anderson (Simon Fraser), and for December 1989 we envisage publishing "Marshall McLuhan: A Reassessment of His Contributions" to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the publication of his Understanding Media. Suggestions for additional general interest topics are welcome.

"Consolidation" and "initiation" have also provided the framework for rethinking and sections of our journal and its lay-out. You will have noticed that familiar rubrics like the Book Reviews, Editor's Column and Notices have been joined by such new features as the NewsForum, Letter to the Editor and Commentary sections. All of these are designed to encourage an active dialogue between you the readers and we, the editors on topical and professional matters. Such as dates of relevant conferences; Department of Communications initiatives; University developments and international contacts. We seek your input, ideas and reaction (even when they are controversial!)

With our most recent issue, Vol. 13:2, the CJC has moved into the computer age. The University of Calgary Press' new desktop publishing facilities have improved the lay out one hundred percent. The more legible print has also saved space and will permit us to feature up to five articles in the same number of pages (96 pp.). By the end of the year we also hope to redesign the cover, which should more adequately represent the professional quality of our publication. Cover ideas from student or faculty designers would be greatly appreciated. Should we have a contest?
Subscriber numbers and subscription costs have been topics of continual concern at the CJC Board meetings. The drop in our subscriber numbers has reduced the SSHRC subsidy considerably and is further depleting the coffers of the corporation, and thus the financial viability of the CJC. Break-even subscription numbers for Canadian scholarly journals are around 550, requiring the recruitment of at least 200 new subscribers in the years to come. Please support this drive as well as the subscription cost changes which the Board will be proposing at Windsor. The editors have undertaken two subscription initiatives: an advertising exchange with other relevant Canadian journals whose readers may be interested in communication issues; and the distribution of subscription flyers to the 40 most prominent communication department libraries in the United States. Additional ideas are eagerly sought and welcomed. New subscriptions should be sent to Ms. Leslie Moore at the University of Calgary Press, 2500 University Drive N. W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4. Ms. Moore now maintains our subscription lists.

A Message to Potential Authors

The quality of the Canadian Journal of Communication depends on the quality of its authors. While there is no indication that our scholarship lags behind that of other countries, we still need a steady flow of good manuscripts. The editors have encouraged the increase of this flow through the publication of theme issues which will permit the juxtaposition and reinforcement of work in particular sub-fields. Various scholars have written and offered to bring together scholarship in their areas of expertise, reaching across disciplinary boundaries in search of contributors. Issues on the media and disarmament, science reporting, reconsidering the audience approaches to computers, feminism and the media, and journalism viewed from Quebec are presently under consideration. Manuscripts in these areas and further suggestions for theme issues are eagerly sought by the editors. (1987/88 Annual Report).

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News from last June’s Meeting in Windsor

Beautiful weather, a lovely campus, Windsor lived up to its friendly city reputation. Thanks are due to Jim Winter (Windsor) and Luc Giroux (Montreal) for organizing the 9th annual session of the CCA as part of the Learned Societies meeting. Next year in Quebec City.

I won’t give a full report (you had to be there), just a few points. Thelma McCormack (York) delivered the keynote Southam Lecture on "The Media and Peace: Are Media, Like Generals, Fighting the Last War?" We will publish the text of McCormack’s talk in the winter volume of the CJC, along with some other provocative papers on the war and peace discourse in the mass communication media.
Sometimes we forget that the Journalism faculties are also an important part of the CCA. In a way, these faculty members cross the great divide between media scholars and media practitioners. This tension was eloquently expressed at the Windsor conference in a paper delivered by Stuart Adam (formerly Carleton, now head of the UWO's Centre for Mass Media Studies). Adam argues that the J-Schools must begin to recognize their place in the university, and their obligation to draw on the intellectual traditions surrounding them, for the benefit of their students. For example, teachers of political reporting must draw their students' attention to the departments of Political Science, and the knowledge and resources available. Peter Bruck (Carleton) in his commentary accused Adam of taking an Eighteenth Century stance on the subject. Toronto's Sunday Star editor Paul Warnicke observed that he did not understand a word of Bruck's commentary, and considered that if Adam were still a practising journalist instead of an academic, his 20 minute speech could have been delivered in 800 words. Bruck took exception to this less than helpful intervention, and wondered how much effort the newspaperman had expended on trying to understand. Roger de la Garde, speaking from the audience, took exception to Warnicke's description of students as "products" who should be better marketed. Warnicke withdrew this phrase.

In this seminar the battle lines were drawn between the journalist and the academic camp. This is a debate that deserves a wider hearing.

Communication studies is alive and well, interesting work is emerging coast to coast. The CJC, and the field which it serves, both can look forward to a year of consolidating initiatives.

Liss Jeffrey  
(McGill University)

SCIENCE AND MEDIA CONFERENCE The Communication Studies Program at The University of Calgary is hosting a conference on September 23-24 on Science and the Media: A Conference for Scientists and Journalists. The conference is co-sponsored by the Sigma Xi scientific research society and the Canadian Science Writers Association. The conference will focus on problems of information transfer and research on science literacy.

A number of workshops for scientists will be conducted on doing interviews for radio and TV and translating science to lay audiences. For science writers, story workshops will be presented on science research in western Canada. Major funding for the conference comes from the Gannett Foundation. For more information, call Marian Davis or Edna Einsidel, Communication Studies Program (403) 220-3924.