

# IN MEDIAS RES

THE OFFICAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MEDIA ECOLOGY ASSOCIATION

VOLUME ONE, ISSUE ONE

INAUGURAL ISSUE, FALL 1999

## President's Message:

## UNDERSTANDING MEA

*Lance Strate, President  
Fordham University*

What is media ecology? It is the study of media environments, the idea that technology and techniques, modes of information and codes of communication play a leading role in human affairs. Media ecology is the Toronto School, and the New York School. It is technological determinism, hard and soft, and technological evolution. It is media logic, medium theory, mediology. It is McLuhan Studies, orality-literacy studies, American cultural studies. It is grammar and rhetoric, semiotics and systems theory, the history and the philosophy of technology. It is the postindustrial and the postmodern, and the preliterate and prehistoric. Media ecology is all of these things, and quite a bit more.

Not everyone who shares the perspective uses the term "media ecology" but for over half a century media ecologists have constituted an invisible college, a republic of letters, a symbolic community, indeed, a virtual society. The Media Ecology Association serves to formalize what already exists as a research tradition and a series of informal networks reaching around the globe. In doing so, the

MEA will work to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information, promote the perspective in theory and in practice, and enlarge our understanding of media.

The MEA is first and foremost an academic organization. The ivory tower can be a lonely citadel, and scholarship is often a solitary activity. That is why academics join together for fellowship and support, for feedback and criticism, for verification and refutation. But the MEA also serves a broader constituency, one that includes teachers, students, and independent scholars and intellectuals, journalists and writers, artists, media professionals and practitioners, consultants, activists, public officials, etc.

The MEA is itself a medium, one that links scholars together and bridges the gap between academia and other sectors of society. It is a medium whose message is community. It is a time-

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## Building Up MEA

*Casey M.K. Lum, Vice President  
William Paterson University*

One of my charges is to help build up the organization of MEA. For this, I have embarked on four initiatives.

First, I am putting together an application for establishing an Affiliate Organization status with the National Communication Association (NCA). In addition to the obvious importance of being officially affiliated with the world's largest communication association (NCA has 7000+ members), this affiliation status also allows MEA to showcase its programs at NCA's annual conventions; it would give our members an extremely important annual forum to share their latest research not only among themselves but also with professional colleagues and students from across the US and around the world. I

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A benefit for MEA members, *In Medias Res* is published semi-annually in the 1999-2000 academic year, October 1999 and April 2000, respectively, by the Media Ecology Association. Inquiries about and/or contributions to this newsletter should be addressed directly to its Editor.

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biased medium whose object is to preserve and improve our theory, practice, and pedagogy. It is a medium that extends knowledge and amputates ignorance. It is a medium that enhances interaction; obsolesces the isolated, alienated, and marginalized intellectual; retrieves the medieval university as a union or guild of educators; and reverses into individual insight, critical ability, and clarity of mind.

The MEA is also a cool medium, one that invites and requires the participation of its members. So join us, if you haven't already done so. And spread the word, encourage others to join. Help us to bring together all of the media ecologists already out there, and to introduce others to the perspective. Linking together, we can build an intellectual alliance that is strong and vibrant, with a mission that is unique and meaningful, a community capable of making significant contributions to

## **MEA To Apply For Non-Profit Status**

*Thomas F. Gencarelli, Treasurer  
Montclair State University*

The most important task of any new organization like the Media Ecology Association is to establish not-for-profit, tax-exempt status. The reason this is so important is that until the requisite paperwork exists on file, we are only an entity in the fact that a bunch of us say we are. Even our Constitution, once ratified, isn't enough to "prove" otherwise. And while recognition by/inclusion in the National Communication Association (NCA) will be a next important step in establishing and legitimizing the organization (see "Building Up MEA" in this issue), the not-for-profit, tax-exempt status remains the primary means for us to reify our existence and make it official.

This status is necessary on both a federal and state level. It is necessary on a federal level for the IRS and federal tax purposes. And it is necessary on the state level because we will have a central business and mailing address, as will our bank.

It will take some time to establish this status, as the IRS at least usually asks to see the organization's books for the year prior to the application, and we have no membership list of dues-paying members, no ledger sheet of income, assets and monies spent. We haven't even held our first conference.

The situation is therefore a kind of "Catch-22" until the Association gets rolling. And with this in mind, here are some of the thoughts we've had about starting things rolling.

First, it seems like a good idea to make Fordham's Department of Communication and Media Studies our central address. The President of the organization (Lance Strate) and especially the Executive Secretary (Sue Barnes) are there. The department and a number of members of the faculty have a deep connection and commitment to Media Ecology. And the New York-metro area is, in general, a home base for Media Ecology in that New York University and its Media Ecology program are also a primary locus.

Second, if Fordham is the seat of the organization, at least at the start, we should also seek a New York-based bank. This makes further sense in that the treasurer, who also lives in New York, will need immediate, unimpeded access to the account.

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*Building Up Continued from page 1*

have been in contact with NCA's Executive Director, Jim Guardino, for his assistance. The application would have gone to NCA's headquarters in Virginia by the time you receive this *In Media Res*. It will then be presented and discussed at one of NCA's Legislative Council business meetings during this year's annual convention in Chicago, November 3-7. I will be at the LC meeting to address any questions from the floor. If the application is approved at this meeting, MEA will be in the position to sponsor its annual programs at NCA's conventions beginning at the one to be held in Seattle in November 2000. I will keep you current on this development on the MEA web page in mid-November.

Second, we are publishing *In Media Res* as a means to create a sense of community among our members whereby we can share news and information relevant to our intellectual and professional interests. For the time being, *In Medias Res* is published semi-annually; our next issue will come up in April 2000. But some of the more timely newsletter functions, such as conference and job announcements, will eventually be handled by a moderated MEA Listserv, which is currently under development. I am also coordinating with Mary Ann Allison, our Internet Strategist, on putting together content for MEA's website which she is developing. Of course, none of these forums would serve any purpose without your active participation. We therefore encourage you to contribute to *In Medias Res*, the MEA website and the upcoming MEA Listserv. What is being included in this Inaugural Issue can only serve as a beginning. We hope to also include such items as web sites of interest, recent publications with a media ecology focus and research grant opportunities. Nonetheless, we hope you would feel free to suggest to us what you think we should include in MEA's publication venues in the future.

Third, I have also been in contact with Susan Drucker (Hofstra University) in exploring the possibility of having MEA as a sponsor of the 2000 annual conference of the Eastern Communication Association (ECA) in Pittsburgh (see related Calls for Papers in this issue). Susan is ECA's current Second Vice President and conference program planner. She has expressed an interest in this collaborative initiative and will discuss this proposal with ECA's Executive Committee. If MEA is to become a sponsor of this conference, we would put together a number of MEA-sponsored panels for presentation in Pittsburgh featuring research by our members. Stay tuned.

Fourth, I have gained an agreement from Gary Radford (Fairleigh Dickinson University), Editor of *The New Jersey Journal of Communication*, to guest edit a special theme issue of the journal that is to be sponsored by MEA. The journal is an official publication of

the New Jersey Communication Association. The proposed theme is Media Ecology. This special issue of *NJ-JOC* is slated for publication in April 2000. Updates will be forthcoming when they become available.

And, I am delighted to inform you that, to forge a strong relationship between MEA and the New Jersey Communication Association and to encourage MEA members to also join the NJCA, Gary has offered to give our paid 1999-2000 members a **complimentary copy** of this special theme issue of the *New Jersey Journal of Communication*.

The above four initiatives are just some of what we are working on in building up MEA's organization. Lance, Thom, Sue and Mary Ann are similarly working hard on other initiatives. I welcome you to contact us with any suggestion you might have in making MEA your professional association of choice. I can be reached at: Department of Communication, William Paterson University, Hobart Hall, 300 Pompton Road, Wayne, NJ 07470; 973-720-2342; 973-720-2483 (fax); casey.lum@nyu.edu. See other columns for more info.

## MEDIA ECOLOGY BOOKNOTES

**Neil Postman, *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century: How the Past Can Improve the Future*.** Alfred A Knopf: New York, 1999 (October).

*A Book Review by Paul Thaler, Mercy College*

As millennium fever sweeps into our social consciousness—and political metaphors—Neil Postman's new book profoundly asks: What "is" it that we need to carry across the bridge to the next century? For Technophiles, and other members of the information-highway club, the answer is machines—high definition TV, Internet, cellular phones—an answer filled with vacuous, sad promise. "These, then," Postman concludes, "are the hollow men Eliot spoke of."

Postman has his own answer—those formative ideas about democracy and humanity cultivated during the Enlightenment. *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century* reacquaints readers with the pantheon of great thinkers—Jefferson, Franklin, Paine, Voltaire, Kant, and Rousseau—and their social, political and intellectual legacy. For Postman, the eighteenth century is less a specific historical point in time, than a metaphorical springboard that heralds the coming of the modern world. It is the time, he writes, that "the battle for free thought was begun and won," a time when radical ideas about religious and political freedom, childhood and education, inductive science, and progress moved into the social diorama. "I am not suggesting that we become

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the eighteenth century," Postman says, "only that we use it for what it is worth and for all that its worth." It is a time "connected to a humane tradition that provides authority and meaningful purpose."

*Building a Bridge to the 18th Century* joins others in the Postman oeuvre to issue a cautionary warning about our willingness—our eagerness—to embrace technological change as a fact of human progress. The warning is everpresent: in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, technology is the Huxleyan nightmare—a modern-day soma pill—in which serious social and political discourse is trivialized in culture's appetite for entertainment; in *The End of Education*, technology is the "false god" that holds the American school system in thrall.

This time Postman's theoretical edge offers a sobering reminder of how far the modern Technological Age has usurped, if not obliterated, the very notion of progress as fashioned two-hundred years earlier. Entrenched in the thinking of the twentieth century, progress is inextricably linked to technological advances. It is a world view, Postman charges, that "no eighteenth-century philosopher...could possibly have embraced: the idea that technological innovation is synonymous with moral, social, and psychic progress." He pointedly takes aim at new-age philosophers preaching the doctrine of divine technology and they include High Priest Bill Gates and MIT's Nicholas Negroponte and his futuristic contemplations of a technological world in which people speak to toasters and doorknobs.

As articulated by Postman's coterie of eighteenth-century thinkers, progress is a historical movement toward a "more peaceful, intelligent and commodious life for mankind." And, with some degree of irony, it is an idea that prompts a rancorous division between "rationalists" and "romanticists," intellectuals that are not easily placed into fixed camps. Postman applauds the likes of Montesquieu, Jefferson, Madison and Washington for their "calm and balanced sense of reason," a prevailing belief that is the foundation stone for the modern democratic state. But Postman also brings to life such men as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and his belief that poetic imagination, and not reason and scientific accomplishment, is the mechanism for moral progress. It is this sharp divergence—and clash—between reason and "the life of feelings" that is carried into the intellectual ferment of the next century.

Postman, to his credit, doesn't flinch from noting that the eighteenth century also ushered into existence the first mechanized weapon of mass human destruction, the guillotine, a weapon that removed 20,000 heads and was perfectly symbolic for the horrific political fracturing caused during the Reign of Terror. The

Enlightenment's greatest intellects, as well, would not fare well by modern standards of political sensitivity. Voltaire and Kant were blunt anti-Semites, and Jefferson held onto the belief that blacks were inferior to whites. But Postman convincingly makes his case that the Enlightenment was not the end but the starting point of a vigorous intellectual debate. And if the eighteenth century invented the idea of progress, then it also expressed its skepticism, says Postman, challenging the very nature of progress, how it is corrupted, and the differences between technological and moral progress.

*Building a Bridge to the 18th Century* is among Postman's richest works to display his philosophical roots. In his twentieth book, spanning three decades, Postman comes full cycle, each chapter—Progress, Technology, Language, Information, Narrative, Children, Democracy, Education—a strata in his long intellectual climb. Deriding the postmodernist wave toward obliterating meaning and fostering cultural relativism, Postman revives the thinking of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes as the forerunners of general semantics theory and "the power of language to map reality"—the basis for *Crazy Talk, Stupid Talk*. Locke and Rousseau's dual perceptions of childhood—as a social construction or as a "natural" creation—enhances ideas from nearly two decades earlier in *The Disappearance of Childhood*. Postman, foremost, remains an educator, and his current book captures the luminous quality so evident in previous work. Here teaching—and learning—is promoted as both a conserving and subversive activity; school, a place where ideas are revered and challenged.

Postman concludes by offering his recipe for the future of education, and it is not without controversy. At a time when more schools are replacing Darwin's theory of human origins with religious interpretations of creation, his proposal for schools to treat evolution and creation science as competing alternative theories might shake an already shaky educational community.

Still, Postman's voice continues to resound in a culture increasingly disillusioned and dislocated in part by intellectual trends that undercut social meaning and purpose. He notes that the coming of the twenty-first century, in one sense, will be little more than another turn of the Earth around the sun. "But it is a name we use to foster hope, to inspire renewal, to get another chance to do it right," he says. In *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century*, Neil Postman eloquently reminds readers where they can look to improve their chances in the coming dawn of the future world.

(Editor's note: Paul Thaler is Professor, Department of Literature, Language and Communication, Mercy College, 555 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522; 914-674-7422; pthaler@aol.com.)

## SCHOLARSHIP IN BRIEF

### Jacques Ellul as Technological Ecologist

*Raymond Gozzi, Jr., Ithaca College*

In 1977, Walter Ong wrote, "Ecological concern is a new state of consciousness, the ultimate in open-system awareness.... Only an open system paradigm represents the living individual in the way in which it must live, that is, in context, inextricably related to the other, the outside, the 'environment'" (pp. 324-325).

French philosopher Jacques Ellul (1912-1994) qualifies as an ecological thinker under this definition. Throughout his 43 books and many articles, Ellul dealt with the new, artificial environment of technology which was becoming the environment of everyday life. Ellul was vitally concerned with the closed-system nature of this technological environment. He identified openness with freedom, and saw human freedom being diminished by the expanding domain of technique.

Ellul's sociological writings are best known in the United States, including "The Technological Society" (1964), "Propaganda" (1965), and "The Political Illusion" (1967). Ellul also wrote many books from a Protestant Christian perspective, including "The Ethics of Freedom" (1976), and "The Subversion of Christianity" (1986). Yet his large corpus of writing exhibits remarkable consistency of theme, concerns, and point of view.

Perhaps Ellul's most specific treatment of media comes in "The Humiliation of the Word" (1985), which also combines the sociological and religious strands of his thought more explicitly than many of his writings. Ellul's thesis in this book is that the technological environment has produced a surfeit of images, and led to the devaluation of the word. For Ellul "the word" is the spoken word. Ellul has little patience with the common idea that words primarily convey information. For him, words play their most important role when they express human relationships, when they allow people to become known to each other and to themselves. To do this, language must be to some extent imprecise, must contain "fuzziness, a halo that is richer and less precise than information" (Ellul, 1985, p. 16).

The spoken word uses sound and hearing as its primary sensory modes. The word occurs sequentially through time, leading Ellul to identify the realms of sound, hearing, and time. (He quarrels with McLuhan in some footnotes over McLuhan's identification of sound with simultaneity and instantaneity.) The word creates an order of knowledge Ellul labels "truth", (which can also contain falsity). The spoken universe deals with issues of truth, falsity, justice, causation, abstraction. The word

can discuss things which are hidden, or which have never been seen. The word is always potentially ready to question, to apply moral or ethical perspectives.

By contrast, the image uses sight as its primary sensory mode. The image is spatial, it "inserts us within an expanse" (1985, p. 13). The image creates an order of knowledge Ellul labels "reality"—concrete reality as it is experienced. "Our civilization's major temptation (a problem that comes from technique's preponderant influence) is to confuse reality with truth. We are made to believe that reality is truth, the only truth.... We think that truth is contained within reality and expressed by it" (1985, p. 27).

Yet, Ellul points out, the domain of reality cannot deal with questions of meaning and value. "... (A)nything concerned with the ultimate destination of a human being belongs to the domain of truth" (1985, p. 28).

Since the image belongs to the order of reality, Ellul contends that it will not be subversive of that order. Images just wind up reflecting the doxa—the received opinion of what the world is like. Thus Ellul notes that those who wish to use films or television to question or subvert existing society will ultimately just wind up reinforcing reality. (While I find myself wanting to argue with Ellul here, I do note the capacity of "mainstream culture" to "co-opt" images of rebellion.)

The only serious questioning of reality can come from the domain of truth, through the word. This is why the devaluation of the word and language is so serious, in Ellul's view. In an artificial environment created by technology, and reinforced by a stream of images, the word offers the only escape, the only possibility for critical thought. But the word is increasingly subordinated to the image, for example, used to describe reality "objectively". The goal of "objective" language is to make it seem that it is spoken by no one, thereby robbing it of its power. The devalued word provides no means of "approaching, discerning, and grasping truth" (1985, p. 33).

The new artificial environment of technology is sustained partly by the flood of technologically generated images from cinema and television, but also photography, advertising, etc. Ellul makes the point that this technologically mediated reality is a fiction. "And when the screen shows us a living reality, such as people's faces or other countries, this is still a fiction: it is a constructed and recombined reality. This situation is intolerable. It produces acute suffering and panic: a person cannot live deprived of truth and situated in fiction" (1985, p. 229).

Therefore Ellul calls for a new iconoclasm, an evict-

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ing of images from the realm of truth. He points up the urgency of critiquing images, statistics, and techniques which claim to convey "the truth". He calls for a reduction of jargon, clarity in language, so the word may again convey issues of truth in an understandable manner. Comprehensive language, he says, expresses love of our neighbor. And, Ellul claims, it is only through the word, operating in the domain of truth, that humanity can apprehend and approach the hidden God.

This summary does not do justice to the elaboration and subtlety of Ellul's argument, in "The Humiliation of the Word" and elsewhere. If it encourages people to further explore the rich work of this "technological ecologist", it will have served its purpose.

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(Editor's note: Raymond Gozzi, Jr. is Associate Professor, TV-Radio Department, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY 14850-7253; gozzi@ithaca.edu. MEA members are encouraged to submit their contributions to SCHOLARSHIP IN BRIEF. Please send your brief proposal to Casey Lum at casey.lum@nyu.edu.)

### LISTSERV INFORMATION

Editor's note: A moderated MEA listserv is also under development. Also note that there is an unmoderated Media Ecology list, owned by Stephanie Gibson of the University of Baltimore, that has been in operation for more than a year. To subscribe to this unmoderated Media Ecology list, send an e-mail with blank subject to Listserv@ube.ubalt.edu and then write in the body of message: subscribe mediaecology. All administrative requests regarding this list at the University of Baltimore should be sent to listserv@ube.ubalt.edu. The following commands can be handled automatically by the list processor: SIGNOFF mediaecology—to remove yourself from the list; REVIEW mediaecology—to get a list of subscribers.)

## Updates On MEDIA- ECOLOGY.ORG

Mary Ann Allison, Internet Strategist  
Allison~Lobue Group

We have a URL reserved (and paid for) which is <http://www.media-ecology.org>. We have an initial design for the site and a start-up strategy.

MEA's website development team is now assembling content. We encourage members to contribute content to our site. And, if interested members want to handle a portion of the site, the volunteering parties should send me a brief e-mail (at [maa@allisongroup.com](mailto:maa@allisongroup.com); [www.allisongroup.com](http://www.allisongroup.com)), including specifics of what they would like to contribute and contact information. I will coordinate with Casey Lum, MEA's Vice President and Editor of *In Medias Res*, in developing content for the site.

The print version of this newsletter will also be accessible on MEA's web site.

The MEA site is hosted (ISP) gratis by Anthony Spina, President, Thorn Communications, LLC ([aspina@thorn.net](mailto:aspina@thorn.net); [www.thorn.net](http://www.thorn.net)). Other major contributors include: for design, Dante Mancini, President, MindTonic ([dante@eleaders.net](mailto:dante@eleaders.net); [www.mindtonic.com](http://www.mindtonic.com)); for development and production: J Metz, President, Communiweb ([jmetz@communiweb.com](mailto:jmetz@communiweb.com); [www.commiweb.com](http://www.commiweb.com)).

**The organization owes these people  
our thanks!**

## SPECIAL EVENT

Last February (1999), Tom Wolfe gave the Inaugural Marshall McLuhan Fordham University Lecture. The second lecture in this series is scheduled on **Thursday, February 17th, 2000. Camille Paglia** will be the second McLuhan Lecturer in this series. The McLuhan lecturers are chosen by a committee consisting of Lance Strate and John Phelan (both from Fordham University), Neil Postman (New York University), James Carey (Columbia University), Derrick DeKerckhove (University of Toronto), as well as Eric McLuhan and Teri McLuhan. For more information, contact Lance Strate, Chair, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Fordham University, Bronx, NY 10458; 718-817-4864; 718-817-4868 (fax); [strate@murray.fordham.edu](mailto:strate@murray.fordham.edu).

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Third, and to begin putting together our non-profit status applications, we have decided that the treasurer open a personal account with the organization's name on it. This would allow us to collect membership dues properly and to pay for MEA-related expenses. At the end of the first fiscal year, the books on this account will be made public and will be used as the record for the federal and state not-for-profit applications.

*(Editor's note: Thom is also responsible for drafting the proposed MEA Constitution and can be reached at: Department of Broadcasting, Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043; 973-655-7339; 973-655-5432 (fax); gencarellit@saturn.montclair.edu. A copy of the proposed Constitution is accessible on <http://www.media-ecology.org>. A print version of this proposed Constitution may be obtained from Sue Barnes (for her contact information see the MEA Membership Form, back cover).*

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

*Sue Barnes, Executive Secretary  
Fordham University*

Currently, the Media Ecology Association is off to a good start with 127 members. As expected, a large portion of our membership is from the Tri-State area and Toronto. However, we also have members in Italy, Mozambique, and New Zealand.

The membership represents a wide range of colleges and universities including: Adelphi University, Boston College, Cornell University, Emerson College, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fordham University, Lewis and Clark College, Providence College, Manhattan Community College, Marymount Manhattan College, New York University, Regis University, Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Colorado, University of Iowa, University of Toronto, and William Paterson University. But, not everyone on the list is an academic. Our membership also includes a doctor, lawyer, and minister along with professional television producers and designers.

To renew your MEA membership for the 1999-2000 academic year, please fill in the membership form in this issue (photocopy accepted) and return it to me with your check. If your colleagues and/or students would like to join MEA, please share with them a copy of the membership form or have them contact me directly. Our numbers do keep growing!

## MEA To Co-Sponsor the 1999 NYSCA Annual Conference

For the second year in a row, the Media Ecology Association is an official co-sponsor of the annual conference of the New York State Communication Association. MEA will sponsor a number of panels at this conference, which will be held at

**Kutsher's Country Club  
in Monticello, NY  
from October 8-10.**

This year's conference features keynote speakers: **Julia Wood**, and a Wilson Fellow awardee speech by MEA's President, **Lance Strate**, who is also NYSCA's President (1998-1999).

Panel topics include the internet, culture, privacy, and access; hate speech, trademark, and legal identity issues; trends in corporate, interpersonal and organizational research; digital music; the Media Ecology Listserv; penal education; and pedagogy and activism. For additional information, contact:

**Susan Jasko** at [jasko@access.hky.com](mailto:jasko@access.hky.com), or [jasko@cup.edu](mailto:jasko@cup.edu); 724-223-1146 or 724-938-4170.

**Membership Does Matter  
Please Fill Out the  
Membership Form on the Back  
Cover and Return It.**

**Only paid members will receive a complimentary copy of the Special NJJC issue on Media Ecology**

**THANK-YOU Gary Radford for your generous support!!**

## MEMBERS' NEWS

**Frank E. X. Dance** (University of Denver; [fdance@du.edu](mailto:fdance@du.edu)) is engaged in research on the digital divide and invites inquiries from others sharing this interest.

**Sue Barnes** is Vice Chair Elect for the NCA Commission on Visual Communication and she is interested in finding people doing Visual Communication research for future NCA panels.

# CONFERENCE NEWS

**Call for Papers**  
**The 91st Eastern Communication Association Annual Conference**  
**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**  
**April 27-30, 2000**

The theme of the 2000 ECA annual conference is "The Architecture of Communication: Construction and Deconstruction." Architecture, like communication, is an ancient art and practice. The history of architecture is the history of civilization with every culture having its own architectural styles analogous to its own language. Messages, relationships, communities, organizations, social networks, identities and laws are constructed and de-constructed. Analysis and criticism involves construction and deconstruction. Communication systems are designed, media systems built, social networks are constructed. We design, plan, assemble messages and media.

**Theme panel proposals** not directly related to one of the interest group areas should be sent to: Susan Drucker, ECA First Vice President, Department of Speech Communication and Rhetorical Studies, Hofstra University, Dempster Hall, Hempstead, New York, 11049; or e-mail: druckers@ix.netcom.com.

Proposals for **Short Courses** should be sent to Sue Barnes, Short Course Program Chair (for her contact information see the MEA Membership Form, on the previous page).

Those interested in **Special Programs** should contact Susan Jasko, Special Programs Chair,, Department of Communication Studies, 250 University Avenue, California University of PA, California, PA 15419; jasko@access.hky.com, or jasko@cup.edu.

Individuals and/or institutions wishing to place an advertisement in the 2000 convention program, or co-sponsor an event, should contact S. Diane McFarland, Director of Marketing, D'Youville College, 31 Callodine Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14226; dianemac@buffnet.net. Please contact the primary planner as early as possible to determine specific submission guidelines. Deadline for submission of paper and program proposals is **October 15, 1999**.

*More Conference Information on Page 7*

**Join the MEA and receive a complimentary copy of the New Jersey Journal of Communication's Special Issue on Media Ecology**

## MEA Membership Application/Renewal Form (October 1999-September 2000)

Please feel free to photocopy this form for yourself or your students and colleagues. Please PRINT ALL INFORMATION below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Affiliation (please include your title or rank, if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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Please send your complete membership form and dues/donation to MEA's Executive Secretary, Sue Barnes, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Fordham University, Bronx, NY 10458; 718-817-4855; 718-817-4868 (fax); barnes@murray.fordham.edu. Please make your checks payable to Thomas Gencarelli to avoid any difficulties in depositing to the MEA account. Thank you for joining and supporting MEA.