4th Annual MEA Convention
June 5-8, 2003
Remapping Communication Environments
Sponsored by
The Hofstra University School of Communication and Hofstra Cultural Center
Hempstead, New York

Convention Coordinators Susan Drucker (druckers@ix.netcom.com) and Barbara Kelly (Barbara.M.Kelly@hofstra.edu) have been busy with the myriad details which make up a convention. The entire conference will be housed in Dempster Hall, the School of Communication. Coffee will be served within Dempster Hall and receptions are adjacent. There are commercial locations surrounding Dempster Hall which will be available for lunch and snacks.

Dormitory accommodations will be available on a limited basis. Rooms in the dorms have been tentatively set aside for 50 people. The cost per person is $31.

Keynote Speaker will be James Carey of Columbia University. Featured Speakers will be Brenda Danet, Barry Wellman, and Marvin Kitman. Information on all speakers on p. 4.

President's Message
The Tasks Ahead: Consolidation and Growth
Lance Strate, Fordham University

The Media Ecology Association is now in its fifth year of existence, and we have come a long way from our origins as a virtual organization emerging out of the media ecology discussion list. And while our greatest labors no doubt lie before us, now is a good time to pause and consider all that we have accomplished in this short period of time.

Over the past four years, we have worked on a variety of major initiatives, such as framing our constitution, launching our annual convention, setting up our website, publishing our newsletter and journal, and working out our membership dues structure. In sum, we have been involved in a start-up process, the goal being to create the structure and major components that the MEA needs to survive and thrive. **I am pleased to be able to report to you now that this startup process has essentially been completed.** (ctd. p. 2)

President's Message (cont.)

Of course, there is much that remains to be done. We have been busy sketching the outlines of our organization, and we now need to fill in the gaps, to complete tasks that were begun and set aside for more important matters, to follow through on what has been set in motion, to review and revise what has already been done, and otherwise attend to those devilish details. It is time to consolidate our gains. This by no means rules out the possibilities of new initiatives, but I believe that for the next phase of our development the emphasis should be on consolidation and growth.

This was the theme that we emphasized when the MEA's Board of Directors met on January 24, 2003. I am also happy to inform you that at that meeting, the **board approved a proposal from the Rochester Institute of Technology to host our 2004 convention (June 10-13),** and we invite proposals and inquiries about 2005 and beyond. We also **approved a proposal to offer the journal, Communication Research Trends, to our members at a 33 1/3 % discount, and we are grateful to CRT's Managing Editor, Paul Soukup, SJ,** for making this membership benefit available to the MEA. We hope to make more such benefits available in the future, and invite further proposals along these lines.

Finally, on behalf of the Board and the Association, I want to **thank Mary Ann Allison** for serving on our first, appointed Board of Directors as well as on our first elected Board. Mary Ann has been a great patron of the MEA, and has helped us in a variety of areas, including setting up and maintaining the MEA website and overall Internet strategy, financial planning, and board assessment. She has been an essential ingredient in our initial success as an organization, and we are grateful for her support and dedication.

Untangled Web – the New MEA Web site
by Jim Morrison, MEA Web Editor

A new version of the MEA Web site [www.media-ecology.org] was launched on January 16, 2003. Developed by our own Paul Kelly, who does such things for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the site provides a degree of functionality and scalability that goes beyond that of the Association's original site.

While the original site served its purposes well for the organization when it was founded, the evolution and growth of the MEA have put strains on the original design, prompting the need for a site architecture that can easily accommodate added modules and functions.

Many thanks are due to Mary Ann Allison, who as Internet Strategist arranged for construction of the original site and free hosting by Thorn Communications, Inc. Our relationship with Thorn continues with the new site, and we are grateful for their continued support.

The site's enhanced functionality and scalability are due to Paul Kelly's innovative thinking in rebuilding its architecture using XML and Cascading Style Sheets. This makes it much easier for us to update, add to, and revise content without having to change more than the text on any individual Web page. Self-defined tags and data type definitions make it possible for changed links and styles to cascade throughout the site with revision to only one or two files, instead of virtually every one.

Since the re-launch, we have added one significant feature and are working on more. **Those wishing to join the MEA or renew their memberships from outside the U.S. can now submit their dues by credit card via PayPal and be billed in their local currency without paying extra.** For such payments, the MEA absorbs a transaction fee. Those paying in U.S. dollars are asked to continue making payment by check, using the 2003 Membership Application/Renewal Form recently sent through the mails and available as a download from the site.

At present I am working on publication of the *Proceedings* of our annual conventions. This has been in our plans from the beginning, and the new architecture makes it possible to do so without significant restructuring. The first set of *Proceedings* to appear will be those for the subsequent conventions to follow shortly. Upon publication an announcement will be made on the Media Ecology electronic mailing list [mediaecology@ube.ubalt.edu]

When you visit the site you will notice that it has a clean but spare design, and more can be done to make it graphically more eye-catching. We are renewing our call for a volunteer or volunteers with skill in graphic design to work with Paul and me on enhancing the visual component of the site, to enact more fully the principle that the medium is the message (who said that?). We would appreciate it if those interested would contact Paul [paul@polvo.ca] and me [jimm@mit.edu] to get the process started.

Thanks to everyone who has had a hand in remaking the site, in particular Janet Sternberg (who designed the logo), Lance Strate, Casey Lum, Thom Gencarelli, Ray Gozzi, and Steve Biggs. We're looking forward to making it an even more useful resource for the Association in the future.

> Thanks to **Mary Ann Allison** who arranged for the first MEA site and free hosting by Thorn Communications, Inc. **Paul Kelly** has rebuilt the site using XML and Cascading Style Sheets. Self-defined tags make it possible for changed links and styles to cascade throughout the site.

> ### MEA adds New Award
> The Mary Shelly Award for Fiction will be added to the MEA awards this year, on the suggestion of Douglas Rushkoff.

New MEA Logo

MEA has a new logo, thanks to the work of many people: Sue Barnes, Janet Sternberg, Jim Morrison, Ray Gozzi, and others. The logo includes the Morse Code dots and dashes for MEA. Some versions include the web site address as well, this one doesn't. The logo will be made available for downloading from the web site www.media-ecology.org.

Convention Speakers

Keynote Speaker will be James Carey of Columbia University. Featured Speakers will be Brenda Danet, Barry Wellman, and Marvin Kitman.

James W. Carey is CBS Professor of International Journalism in Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, former Dean of the College of Communications at the University of Illinois, and the author of Television and the Press (1988), Communication as Culture (1989) and James Carey: A Critical Reader (1997). A follower of Harold A. Innis and a media ecology pioneer in his own right, James Carey is sometimes known as the father of American Cultural Studies.

Benda Danet is a Visiting Fellow in Sociology at Yale University, and Emerita Professor of Sociology & Communication and Danny Arnold Chair in Communications at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the author of Cyberpl@y: Communicating Online (2001) and Pulling Strings: Biculturalism in Israeli Bureaucracy

(1989); and co-editor of Bureaucracy and the Public: A Reader in Official-Client Relations (1973) and Art as a Means of Communication in Pre-literate Societies (1990).

Barry Wellman is Professor of Sociology and Director of the NetLab at University of Toronto. He is the founder of the International Network for Social Network Analysis. He is the editor of Networks in the Global Village (1999) and co-editor of The Internet in Everyday Life (2002), and Social Structures: A Network Approach (1988).

Marvin Kitman has been media critic at *Newsday* since 1969. He has written eight books, including *I am a VCR* (1988) and *George Washington's Expense Account*, (re-issued by Grove/Atlantic in 2000). His articles have appeared in *Harpers*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and elsewhere. He has received several awards including the Townsend Harris Medal in 1992, and the Folio Award in 1988.

2002 MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS
Janet Sternberg, MEA Executive Secretary

272 MEA members
173 (64%) regular members
99 (36%) student members (61 from Marymount)

CURRENT LISTSERV STATISTICS
(AS OF 1//15/03)
224 total listserv subscribers
72 regular members (32%)
18 student members (8%)
90 members (40%)

21 different domain classifications represented on listserv:
top domain groups:
1. edu 96 (43%)
2. com 73 (33%)
3. net 17 (8%)
4. ca 13 (6%)
5. uk 5 (2%)
other 20 (9%) (ae, au, br, cn, de, dk, fi, gr, hu, il, mx, mz, nl, org, ua, za)

MEA is an Affiliate of ICA
Casey Lum, MEA Vice President

At a recent Board Meeting, the International Communication Association (ICA) has approved Media Ecology Association's application as an Institutional Affiliate of ICA. As an official affiliate of ICA, MEA will receive the following benefits:

1. Active (paid) members of MEA may attend ICA's annual conference at the same rate as ICA members. [This represents substantial savings for MEA members when they register for ICA's annual conference. Paid MEA members who are not ICA members will be asked to identify their active MEA membership in the ICA conference registration form for cross checking purpose and to receive this benefit].

2. MEA's members will be given an opportunity to participate in ICA's publication discount program that annually offers academic publications at a minimum 15% discount.

3. MEA will have one program slot at each ICA annual meeting invited through the ICA and may have others that are competitively selected through the program planning process or program chair

4. MEA's designated representative will receive subscriptions to ICA's journals and newsletter as well as all mailings from ICA. [MEA's Executive Committee has designated Casey M.K. Lum, Vice President, who carried out this application on a mandate from the Board of Directors, to be MEA's representative to ICA.]

5. MEA's designated representative may vote as an active ICA member.

6. MEA may submit news articles for consideration for use in the ICA newsletter .

7. MEA's website may have a hotlink to ICA's website.

8. MEA's name and contact information will be included in various ICA publications.

ISU MEDIA ECOLOGY ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED

NORMAL, IL (February 11, 2003) – The Illinois StateUniversity Media Ecology Association (MEA) will be holding meetings on the second and fourth Sundays of every month in room 158 of Fell Hall on ISU's campus. The ISU MEA was founded by graduate student Keith Massie under the advisement of Department of Communication Assistant Professor Patrick O'Sullivan. The purpose of the MEA is to promote media literacy and criticism, research into media effects, and greater public awareness of the impact of the media on society. Meetings will consist of film viewings and discussions of relevant readings. More information on Media Ecology and the MEA can be found at http://www.ilstu.edu/depts/studentlife/studentclubs/clubs/info249.shtml

CALL FOR BOOK CHAPTERS: Visual Approaches to Website Analysis

The following is a call for book chapters to be included in a book on visual approaches to website analysis, edited by Sally Gill. We are looking for book chapters that explore various approaches to website analysis from the perspective of visual communication, visual rhetoric, visual perception and cognition, signs and symbols, typography, and graphic design. Please send 2 copies of chapter submission by July 1, 2003 to: Sally Gill, Ph.D., 111 W. Pennsylvania Ave. #4R, San Diego, CA 92103-4055; email: sgill@alliant.edu *or* sally.gill@cox.net

RESEARCH AGENDA

David Linton, Professor of Communication Arts and Chair of the Humanities Division at Marymount Manhattan College, presented his work in a session at a conference in Liverpool, England sponsored by the Institute for Feminist Theory and Research. His talk was titled: "Bleeding in Public: Representations of Menstruation in Film and Television." Media Ecologists with suggestions for the research, examples of scenes alluding to menstruation in film and/or TV, or who would like to invite him to share his research and collection of clips with classes or meetings are invited to contact David at Marymount Manhattan College or via his email at: dlinton@mmm.edu.

Call for nominations to the Board of Directors

Each year, there are four positions available on the Board of Directors of the Association. The Board of Directors consists of 12 members elected by the Association's membership. The Executive Committee (President, Vice-President, Executive Secretary, Treasurer, and the Historian) are elected from among and by the 12 members on the Board of Directors. The term of office is three years.

Nominees must be members in good standing of the Association.

To nominate a member, or volunteer yourself as a nominee, please contact Bill Petkanas no later than September 15, 2003. Please include a 100-150 word statement about your interest in the MEA for inclusion with ballots.

Email (preferred): PetkanasW@wcsu.edu Phone: 860-355-2674

Mail: Bill Petkanas

Dept. of Communication and Theater Arts

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181 White Street, Danbury, CT 06810.

Be Interesting
Raymond Gozzi, Jr.

How can the MEA attract new members? How can it gain status in the academic world? These questions rightly concern us. My answer to both questions is**:**

Be Interesting. Have interesting panels at communication conventions. Have interesting (and friendly) conventions in New York City in beautiful June. Maintain an interesting (and civil) listserv. Have an interesting (and informative) web site people can visit. Twice a year put out an interesting newsletter.

Sounds good, but...how do we "be interesting"? In one sense it is not hard. The competition isn't that heavy. I look with dismay through the dreary articles in most communication journals, or the tortured paper titles in national conventions. Do these people really think they will learn anything about communication with jargon, deterministic statistics, or an excessively narrow focus?

We can be interesting because we work from a "canon" of scholars who took a broader view. Media, communication, and society form an incredibly complex ecology. We need to "probe" as much as to prove. We should not pretend that the discipline of communication is an exact science. We need to be free to try out new ideas, and receive sympathetic and constructive feedback. The Media Ecology Association already is a good place to do these things. Let's stay true to our open-minded roots. We'll be plenty interesting.
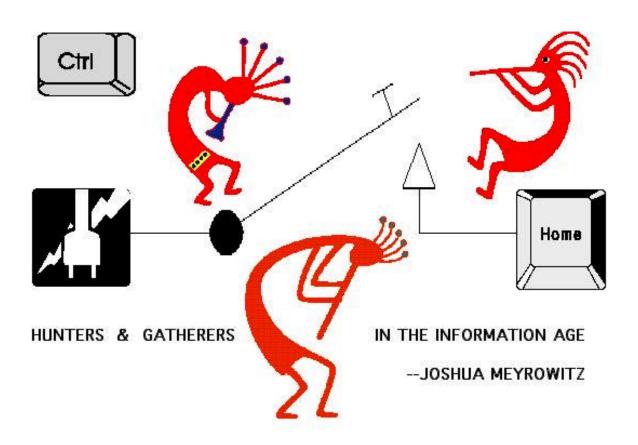
Listserv Troubles

Several times in the past few months, the University of Baltimore listserv has malfunctioned. Messages were never posted, or posted multiple times, lost in some sort of "mail loop". List Manager Janet Sternberg has played a timely role in getting the problems fixed. But the incidents have left some MEA officers looking for a different host. The incidents have prompted me to reflect on the media ecology of the Media Ecology Association.

I would say that the Media Ecology List is currently the defining medium in the media ecology of the MEA. In part, the MEA grew out of the Media Ecology Listserv, founded and still "owned' by Stephanie Gibson at the University of Baltimore. The Media Ecology List is truly the "medium" in which the "culture" of the MEA expresses itself daily. People establish identities on the list, and personalities take on life. Interesting and thoughtful exchanges occur with remarkable frequency, even despite recent descents into politics. We get a chance to read and write Media Ecology, decide what is a media ecological approach to a question (and what is not), hear what Marshall McLuhan said about an issue from people who knew him. People noticed when there were no messages from "Mediaecology" in their email inboxes. Still, a virtual organization is a fragile thing. Two cheers for the listserv, but let's keep our priorities straight, and keep up our face-to-face contacts. It's worth the effort.

Comments from Peter Montgomery (a Canadian English Professor) on the MEA list, writing about media coverage of the Middle East, Palestine, Israel, Iraq, etc.
… I guess bottom line is I see a media fog rising. A serious, blinding media fog coming at us from many directions, with a serious factor being the internet. It could have dire consequences, but I don't even know how to define its character, let alone know what the right responses are.

HUNTERS & GATHERERS   IN THE INFORMATION AGE

--JOSHUA MEYROWITZ

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