

Tweet Others the Way You Want to be Tweeted

I'm so very honored and humbled to be serving as SSCA's president. Since I'm president, I wanted my first presidential article in *Connections* to be amazingly presidential; and apparently there's nothing more presidential than tweeting. I will come to that later on and I do have a point with the Twitter stuff, but no tweets here, no screen shots, etc. So I will supply a reflection on Nashville and let you know what I've been up to since our April convention, and then offer some thoughts on our current strategic plan and how we're doing with that. By the way, we will have a new, even more strategic, strategic plan after our next Strategic Planning Committee meeting in 2020 since the business model of contemporary American higher education tells us we must have a strategic plan—mainly in order to have a strategic plan.

SSCA continues to thrive and our recent 88th Annual Convention is indicative of that. Apparently it was the second largest convention event in recent memory (second only to Savannah when our current Executive Director, Jerry Hale, planned the conference). I thought our theme was clever (of course I do...), and so *Muses and Musings in the Music City* seemingly generated a lot of muses and musings; according to my numbers we had over 818 participants on 226 (including the UHC) program slots. We had fantastic spotlights including a panel at the Nashville Public Library's Civil Rights Reading Room, a panel at Nashville's Parthenon in Centennial Park (sponsored in conjunction with the City of Nashville and open to the public), additional panels on the history of Nashville and the music industry in the city, and National Public Radio's Ann Powers served as our luncheon keynote speaker. And, we had a live band panel at B.B. King's thanks to John Saunders. Anecdotal, I heard a lot of great reviews not only of the terrific papers, presentations, and performances, but also about the off-sites, and the general tone of the convention. I want to once again give my sincere thanks to everyone



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who helped us pull all this off including fellow officers, all the division and interest group planners and reviewers, Janet Fisher with Convention Direct (miracle worker!), and of course our ED (Executive Director), Jerry Hale, his College of Charleston posse, and the entire registration crew. I thought the convention was pretty incredible; we smashed it.

So, what have I been up to since Nashville? At the end of the convention our Committee on Committees met and discussed potential new members for our standing committees. The power of committee appointment re-

sides with that committee, but I reached out to potential new committee members as authorized and I'm so pleased with our new committee members and I know they will do a great job. If you recall, I sent out an email to all SSCA members regarding those appointments and the most recent list should also be on our organization's website. Additionally, as you might recall, we altered the number of years the ED serves. We have reduced the term from 5 to 4 years, with a year of shadowing and year of being shadowed so that the overall commitment goes from 7 to 6 years. Our constitution stipulates that a new ED shall be appointed by the EC (Executive Committee) upon recommendation of a sub-committee appointed by the president and ratified by membership at the convention. I have appointed that sub-committee and I'm pleased that Roseann Mandziuk, Victoria Gallagher, Carl Cates, Richard Ranta, and Wendy Atkins-Sayre are serving on that committee. They drafted an ED job announcement that has been sent out to membership and placed on our website. I very much appreciate the hard work they have done and will be doing.

Additionally, I have reappointed an ad hoc Marketing Committee. Ashli Stokes, our Marketing Director, has been doing a terrific job and there are several proposals the

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When SSCA Feels Like Family

At about 1:45 pm on April 2, 2018 I was standing in front of the copy machine in my office making copies for the SSCA conference in Nashville. Katie Monk, SSCA staff member and the Budget Analyst for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the College of Charleston, came downstairs and said "Public Safety is on the phone. They said it is an emergency." I walked

upstairs to my office and the call was transferred to me. The person on the line said "Dean Hale I am a dispatch officer. I am sorry I don't have more complete information, but we are at a shift change. I've been asked to tell you there is an emergency at home and that you should go home immediately."

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Family

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My mind started to race. I was afraid something had happened to my wife Janet. As I started to leave the office my phone rang again. I looked at the caller ID and the phone number was my son-in-law's. My daughter was pregnant and I immediately thought, "Oh no, something has happened to Theresa and the baby!" I answered the phone and it was my daughter. She was crying and said "Dad. Mom needs you to get home as fast as you can."

I ran the four blocks from my office to the parking deck and drove toward home as quickly as I could. I am lucky there were no police on the James Island Connector because I was approaching speeds of 90 miles per hour. We lived down a dirt road where there are only three parcels of land, and as I turned into the subdivision the main road was blocked by emergency vehicles. I couldn't get to my dirt road by driving. I asked a resident if she knew what was happening. She said "Do you live in the Moore's old house?" I had no clue who had owned the house before us and answered "I live on the left side of the street." She told me I needed to get there as quickly as I could. I ran from my truck toward our street. A police officer saw me coming and hollered "Are you the homeowner?" I said "I think so," and he told me that if anyone tried to stop me I should just shout out "homeowner" and they would let me past.

I turned the corner to see several fire trucks in front of my home. Janet was across the street in the neighbor's yard. We embraced as I approached and crying she said "I couldn't get Marlee out of the house." We have three dogs and Marlee, an 8 pound terrier mix, is the smallest. She was barking and alerted Janet to the fire before there was any other clue that something was wrong. As Janet tried to round up the dogs and get out of the house, Marlee ran under the bed in the master bedroom and wouldn't come out.

We stood in the neighbor's yard and watched firefighters from four parts of Charleston fight the fire that engulfed our home. After about 90 minutes, a muscular firefighter, about six inches taller than me, came walking out of the house carrying our little dog. He found her alive underneath what remained of my dresser. The dresser sheltered her from flames and falling debris. She lived because she was close to the ground and didn't inhale a lot of smoke. One of the firefighters, the one handling the nozzle of the biggest of the hoses, was overcome by heat. He was transported to a local hospital and released a short time later.

I cannot count the number of times I have seen hurricane, tornado, earthquake, or fire damage on television and said "All I would care about is having everyone survive." Watching a lifetime of family memories go up in flames before my eyes changed my perspective. I lost the only keepsakes I had from several family members who had passed. My paternal grandfather's Bible was gone. So was a Native American woodcarving of an owl

my paternal grandmother had given me. Even seemingly trivial things like a ceramic dresser caddy that had belonged to my late father, a St. Bernard nursing a hangover, took on greater significance than I could have imagined. Then there were family photos, drawings, paintings, and pottery made by our three adult children when they were kids. Looking back on it all, the house can be replaced but the keepsakes cannot. I worry that as I grow older, if my memory fades these triggers or reminders of my life and my family will be gone, and that the memories will go too.

When I moved to the University of Georgia Dale Leathers and Dwight Freshley began to gently cajole me about becoming an SSCA member. The first SSCA conference, other than the joint SSCA/CSCA conferences that I attended, was the 1994 conference in Norfolk. I spent a lot of time in the evenings going to Tidewater Tides baseball games with Dick Conville, Chuck Tardy, and Andy King, none of whom I knew before meeting them there. The conference won me over because of the friendly atmosphere and the approachability of some amazing scholars whose work I had read and admired for many years.

I have missed two SSCA conferences since 1994. The first was in 2004 when I missed my flight to Tampa. A truck full of logs turned over on the ramp to Interstate 20 near Conyers, Georgia and snarled traffic for a few hours. I asked if I could fly standby, but trying to get to Florida during what was spring break for a couple of hundred universities proved impossible. That miss was especially painful because I was scheduled to present on a panel honoring my UGA colleague and friend Dwight Freshley. The second SSCA conference I missed was this past year. Janet and I thought about me coming to Nashville. Living in a Holiday Inn Express, which we did for three weeks, with two people and three dogs was difficult enough. I cannot imagine what would have happened if Janet had been left to do that, navigate two fire investigations, an insurance company, and the like by herself. I also know that I would have had an especially difficult time concentrating on, or enjoying, anything that was happening in Nashville.

Janet and I were deeply touched by the cards, emails, and gifts we received from so many SSCA friends and colleagues, and from people in the field from across the country. I do not mind telling you that the outpouring of support moved me to tears several times. I know I frustrated a lot of people who asked with the best intentions what they could do for us in the aftermath of the fire. Please forgive me if you were among those frustrated souls. When we were standing in front of the shell of our house as the firefighters finished fighting the fire and were preparing to leave, it dawned on us that we didn't have toothbrushes, or toilet paper, or clothes. The experience is so immediately overwhelming that we didn't know what sort of assistance to seek. We didn't know what to tell people. I was being sincere when I told many of you that the best thing you could do to help me was to make sure that

Jason Munsell, who planned an excellent program, and our members who were coming to Nashville, had a great conference experience.

Our house fire was caused by wires in the ceiling fan of the master bedroom that somehow touched and arced. Because the fire started in the attic, fire investigators told us it was burning 25 to 30 minutes before any smoke moved into the living area. We were fortunate that the ceiling didn't collapse on Janet and the dogs. Since the smoke was trying to escape through attic vents and out of the roof it took quite some time before the smoke detectors in the living area sounded. Two fire investigators told me that everyone should have smoke detectors in their attics, but that almost nobody does. Please think about adding smoke detectors to the attics of your homes if you don't have them there. The firefighters were fantastic and we are deeply indebted to them, but we also wonder what might have happened if they had had a 25 minute head start fighting the fire.

This past spring when I contacted Janet Fisher, Vicki Gallagher, Jason Munsell, and Carl Cates to tell them why I would not be able to come to Nashville they assured me that the conference would be a success. By all accounts they were right! The SSCA Administrative Committee, Executive Council, SSCA staff, and our members all had my back and yours! They helped ensure that all of Jason's hard work could be appreciated by our members.

I was drawn to SSCA in 1994 because it was friendly. People seemed to genuinely enjoy one another's fellowship and company. SSCA felt like family to me then. SSCA has never felt more like family to me than it did last April, and I cannot wait for a reunion in Montgomery.

From the bottom of my heart thank you all very much.

CONNECTIONS

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From Nashville to Montgomery



The National Memorial for Peace and Justice



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Randall Bramblett's song, *Driving to Montgomery*, "where the times have changed" (<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/halejl%40cofc.edu+montgomery/160c2d544e132447?projector=1>), provides a perfect segue between our 2018 conference in the music city to our 2019 conference in Montgomery.

After, literally, driving to Montgomery for the site visit and having heard some of the captivating panel proposals being submitted, I have to say that Montgomery is shaping up to be another strong SSCA conference. In addition to what I anticipate will be a wide variety of sessions to attend, our conference site at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa offers a location with access to a variety of museums which explore how the times have changed, as well as the conflict and crisis that brought us to the crossroads.

As we continue to plan the Montgomery conference, we also reflect on the Nashville conference. A review of survey results from participants in the Theodore Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference brought some good suggestions we are working to incorporate in Montgomery.

- The students preferred that the conference stay on the same schedule of around noon on Friday through Saturday, so we'll continue as in the recent past.
- Some students indicated they would like to have had more information. While we added a facebook group to provide additional information last year, it's likely that some universities provide more mentoring. It's also likely that some students attended without any university faculty member, especially given that we had papers accepted from students at universities across the country. To that end, Shawn Long will be working with a local university (thank you Auburn University Montgomery) for student volunteers to assist in the UHC check in and to help with any questions students might have.
- Students also noted that they wished they had more time meeting with graduate program representatives. We agree, as the UHC breakfast has become increasingly packed with more to cover.

The Renaissance has worked with us for a location for an additional hour of graduate school displays and interaction to occur after the last UHC panel and before the Osborne reception.

- Of particular note, a majority of the students indicated they had partial or full financial support from their universities, which is encouraging. If your school has not provided any support, we hope knowing this might be helpful for the future.

With an approximate 39% survey response rate from attendees, we found that, in general, they were very satisfied with the UHC experience. Many of us in the association have long been proud of our work with the UHC, and it's always good to see that the undergraduates, too, value the experience.

December 10 is the UHC deadline, and hopefully you had papers or panel proposals in for the SSCA September 7 deadline – or you have volunteered to review for divisions. Either way, make sure you've marked your calendar for that drive, or flight, to Montgomery.



The National Memorial for Peace and Justice

Communication and Innovation: Changes, updates and gratitude



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In addition to the many interesting panels and enjoyable events that took place during our annual conference in Nashville back in April 2018, the SSCA Executive Council and leadership team conducted important business on behalf of our membership and of

the association. I'll briefly summarize a couple of these items below. I also want to take this opportunity to give a **big shout out of gratitude to the 2017-18 Executive Council members and leadership team and to thank each of you for your efforts.** SSCA could not function without your thoughtful participation in our governance!

At the business meeting, the membership voted to accept two changes to the SSCA constitution as recommended by the Executive Council:

- Change the term of office for the Executive Director from 5 years to 4 years, with a year of shadowing on each end for an overall commitment of 6 years rather than the previous 7.
- Change the wording of our Constitution regarding representation to the NCA legislative assembly to read as follows:

Three members elected at large by members of the Association for a three-year term to serve as representatives to the Legislative Assembly of the National Communication Association (NCA) as specified by the constitution of NCA. When possible and on a three-year rotating basis, they shall be elected to represent the interests of K-12, Four-Year College/University, and Community/Two-Year College members. Representatives to the Legislative Assembly of the National Communication Association shall present a report based on correspondence and notes from business meetings of the National Communication Association to the Executive Council at its first meeting at the annual convention.

As a result of the first change, a call for applications for the next Executive Director of SSCA has been posted on the SSCA website. Please be sure to take a look at the call and then join me in encouraging qualified members of the association to consider applying for this important position.

I hope you will also join me in **expressing gratitude to Jerry Hale**, the ED with whom I have been privileged to work during my time in the leadership rotation of SSCA. Jerry has brought fiscal responsibility, administrative wisdom, and a remarkable level of commitment to the association and its membership (with some occasional irreverence thrown in for fun!). Of course, Jerry will continue in the ED position for a while longer so thank you for your continued support for him and for the association.

As we move through the Fall Semester, all good wishes for a productive year.

Capital of Dreams

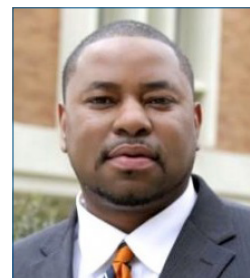
Montgomery, Alabama positions itself as the "Capital of Dreams." The Capital of Dreams is an appropriate slogan for the host site for our 89th Annual SSCA convention and the 29th Annual Theodore Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference (UHC) next April. There is a promotional video, produced by the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, highlighting the various activities in the capital city of Alabama that begins with a quote stating that "Dreams start here." If we extend this idea of dreaming to SSCA, the Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference is the perfect forum where academic dreams begin. Important communication ideas are germinated, nurtured and grown in a collegial and scholarly setting for our undergraduate students at SSCA.

There is no better place than the Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference for undergraduate students interested in the study and practice of communication to crystalize or imagine their future as communication scholars or practitioners. Our conference provides an opportunity for students to inter-

act with the nation's top scholars; interact with their academically-gifted peers in an open and constructive environment; learn more about the diverse and extensive graduate programs across the region; and receive constructive feedback and encouragement from our vast and collegial network of scholars. The UHC provides the perfect setting to facilitate the dreams of our talented undergraduate students. Several UHC alum frequently speak about how valuable the UHC was to their academic development and growth; many of whom currently serve as reviewers for the honors conference.

As faculty, you play a significant role in planting the seeds and nurturing students' academic dreams and aspirations by encouraging them to produce their best work at your home institutions and then recommending that they submit their best papers and applied projects to the UHC, while mentoring them throughout the process. The Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference is where "Dreams thrive!"

Speaking of thriving. I am pleased to announce a



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new feature of the UHC this year. The national office of the National Communication Association (NCA) will recognize the top ranked individual student paper presented by a member of Lambda Pi Eta, the national honors society of NCA. The award will be presented as part of the UHC program. This collaboration with the national office of NCA continues to extend the footprint of SSCA in important ways.

The Undergraduate Honors Conference call for papers can be found at: <https://ssca.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/2019/2019%20Call%20for%20papers%20revision%201.pdf>

The deadline for all submissions is December 10, 2018.

Tweet

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committee has made that I have sent on to the Constitution Committee for discussion and a possible proposal(s) for change (such as creating a standing Marketing Committee). Further, I know our team is always on the lookout for fancy ways to innovate our submission process that aren't cost prohibitive. Our current system isn't terribly sexy, but our email submission procedures are neither too awfully difficult nor debilitating to planning for our size. But we shall continue to think about how we can employ new technologies while not taking for granted our current good fortunes. Further, we are constantly trying to find ways to give voice to our members while adhering to the parliamentary parameters that guide our business meeting procedures and so I have been doing some thinking on that end while at the same time appreciating the efficacy of our current model. Even more, I have worked with NCA to make sure we have our slot for our annual mid-year meeting and I look forward to that meeting in Salt Lake City.

As most probably know, we do have a strategic plan (as mentioned above), and it is a tome of splendid ideas. Strategic plans (and planning) do serve a valuable function so long as the final plan doesn't stifle creativity and unseen, emergent opportunities. And, the whole thing is really more of a guideline than anything else. You can read the plan for yourself on our website. It is fitting that the theme of those guidelines is community. We want to always continue to enhance the convention experience for our membership, advance our teaching, research, and disciplinary contributions to the greater good of society, and consistently expand our constituencies with a sincere desire for full inclusion and full respect. I don't want to necessarily offer a list of things we have accomplished, but in the three years since we fashioned that plan we have done quite a bit. I will highlight just a few.

First, and with special thanks to Ashli Stokes and David Nelson, we have initiated our SSCA podcasts. The first podcast was online in April and several are planned for the future. Ashli, as our Marketing Director, and the ad hoc committee (as mentioned above) have generated some amazing ideas and we should be soon seeing some good, practical updates to our website and continued savvy use of social media. Given the work of the Constitution Committee, we plan to vote on a new marketing structure in Montgomery which potentially will include

a new position within our Resource Development Committee to pursue ad sales, institutional memberships, exhibitor sponsorships, UHC sponsorships (current functions of the Marketing Director), helping the Marketing Director capitalize on promoting the work of SSCA to external audiences using multiple channels. I would urge you to contact Ashli if you would like to obtain an ad, institutional membership, or UHC breakfast sponsorship in Montgomery; sooner rather than later. And I know she is thankful for previous sponsorships. Please email her!

Second, you might remember that in Austin we voted to reconsider our membership categories and fees in large part to enhance our financial sustainability. And we seem to be doing quite well with our membership numbers and our finances. We also renamed some divisions, renamed officers (First and Second VP, for instance), crafted a more cogent standard of ethics for submissions, and other "little" things that won't make the front page news, but those changes are little tinkering that advance our association. Third, I'm pleased with the community outreach and connection in Nashville. All the off-site stuff was, in part, guided by our strategic plan with its emphasis on building our constituencies; one of my VP Spotlights (thanks to Paul Stob) included elementary school teachers in the Nashville. So, in short, we are doing good work and I'm very proud of all the things we've accomplished and what we shall continue to accomplish. It still amazes me how we do all the things we do as an all-volunteer organization. We all have so much (too much) on our plates. And we sure don't do the work of SSCA for it the financial remuneration, power, or accolades (because there are none of those). We do it out of an authentic spirit of service. We do it because we want to make some sliver of something better. We do it because we think SSCA is an important and generous community that, in turn, can serve others in positive, impactful ways. So, thank you so much for all those who serve SSCA in any and all capacities. And I know that Victoria Gallagher, our Immediate Past President, is heading our Nomination Committee and will be looking for folks to serve as our next Second VP.

When I was honored to be nominated for SSCA's Second VP I put together a little "platform" folks could read. I had three little thingies: Collegiality is Good Business, Inclusivity is Bigger than a Brand, and Celebrate Good Times—Come On! I hope to do more to help our membership navigate the landscape of our contemporary assessment-centric higher education context. I also want to do more about reaching out to community college fac-

ulty, graduate students, and K-12 teachers (and we have folks working on this!). The members of SSCA's future are not the members of SSCA's past; that's obviously literally true, but I also mean it figuratively. We also still need to do more to tell our stories and I know our new marketing ideas will help with that. I will work hard to continue to promote and celebrate the SSCA community through enhanced use of all mediums of communication.

We seem to be living in messy times. And since we haven't been sending out paper copies of this newsletter when you read it, if you read it, it will be online. It is fitting that this newsletter is called, *Connections*, and we are seemingly more connected than ever. Most of us live in a hyperconnective way (always within reach of our phones) even as we still have an unfortunate digital divide. SSCA should embrace and take full advantage of the technological wonders of our current environment. There are many cool tech opportunities out there to help us implement our strategic plan. At the same time, some folks don't want to be on Facebook, or Twitter, or whatever or anything—and we should respect that. These nifty, social media tools are indeed tools to be wielded, but wielded for a reason beyond mere reach or efficiency. They are always used productively. For instance, we see a lot of messages out there (often on Twitter) that diminish the worth and agency of others. SSCA is a strong community and I know our members have open minds, open hearts, and a genuine care for the study of human communication, each other, and humanity generally. As we move forward in these messy times, we will continue to move forward in an ethical, balanced, prudential way with our aim at sincere inclusion.

We have a great leadership team and all are working so very hard on behalf of SSCA. Big thanks to Pam Bourland-Davis and Shawn Long; I know they will plan fantastic things in Montgomery. And I've heard the site visit went very well and that the venue is near perfect for our needs (all meeting rooms on one floor!). Joining those already mentioned above (Jerry, Vicki, Ashli) are Wendy Atkins-Sawyers, our Finance Chair, and under the leadership of Editor Jennifer Samp, our *Southern Communication Journal* continues to make very significant contributions to our understanding of human communication. I'm so excited for the year to come and it is perhaps appropriate that the next time we shall see each other face to face will be Montgomery, Alabama. At this important crossroad of change in the United States, let us all treat each other with the dignity and respect we all deserve.

Annual Financial Review Underway

At the end of August the necessary documents were submitted to Harvard and Associates. The review will be completed in September and the results will be reported both at the midyear business meeting held each year as part of the annual conference of the National Communication Association and at our annual conference in Montgomery.

SSCA DIVISIONS AND INTEREST GROUPS

SSCA DIVISIONS

- Applied Communication
- Communication Theory
- Community College
- Freedom of Speech
- Gender Studies
- Instructional Development
- Intercultural Communication
- Interpersonal Communication
- Language and Social Interaction
- Mass Communication
- Performance Studies
- Political Communication
- Popular Communication
- Public Relations
- Rhetoric and Public Address
- Southern Argumentation and Forensics

INTEREST GROUPS

- Association for Communication Administrators (ACA)
- American Society for the History of Rhetoric
- Ethnography
- Kenneth Burke Society
- Philosophy & Ethics of Communication

Don't forget to visit the SSCA website at www.ssca.net!

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