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NCA Presidential Address and Awards Presentation

The information environment has changed considerably since I was a young undergraduate researcher writing down Dewey Decimal numbers from the library card catalog. Immersed in higher education for several decades, I have seen tangible and significant effects from changes in technology, some of which I believe have serious consequences on our collective ability to address and resolve critical problems facing our world. In more recent times, as an officer of the National Communication Association, I have also come to appreciate and be critical of the role of scholarly associations in fostering an educational system that meets the needs of society. Larger than any local department or school, learned societies have an important role to play addressing what appears to be a descent back into an age of might over democracy, of fear over coexistence, and of isolated publics over mutual discourse. I will examine the impact of media environments on attention and focus, the reconfiguration of public space and political discourse by social media, and quirks of the changing professoriate, and I will attempt to provide suggestions for the future.

While there is controversy over the definitions and nature of a "dark age," there is no denying the possibility of a longer slide into chaos and authoritarianism. Loss of cultural memory and ignorance of the lessons of history are among the reasons why such an era could re-emerge in modern times, particularly given the potential impacts of the erosion of attention and the diminishment of engaged public discourse. Join me as I share my concerns and my hope, and look at the realities of the role of NCA and similar associations moving forward.

Following the [NCA Presidential Address](#), the annual awards ceremony will celebrate the year's best works across a wide range of scholarly, service-oriented, and pedagogical accomplishments. The NCA Presidential Address and Awards Presentation is sponsored by [Routledge, Taylor & Francis](#).

--[Star A. Muir](#), NCA President, George Mason University

NCA Day of Service

For the third consecutive year, NCA will be hosting a [Day of Service](#), sponsored by Kendall Hunt, on Wednesday, November 13. This year, we will be offering both a morning (8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) and an afternoon (1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.) session.

The morning session will take place at Second Chance. Second Chance salvages usable materials from buildings being demolished, sells the material, and uses the revenue generated to provide job training and workforce development.

The afternoon session will be at the Boys & Girls Club of Metropolitan Baltimore (BGCMB). BGCMB serves more than 500 young people at one of its club locations.

Join us for one or both time slots, depending on your convention schedule. Transportation to and from the Hilton Baltimore will be provided. Lunch, and an opportunity to share your experience with others, will also be provided between the two sessions at the Hilton. There is a \$20 registration fee, but that will be refunded following the convention to all who attend the Day of Service.

You can register for the Day of Service when you register for the convention. If you have already registered for the convention and would like to add the Day of Service session to your registration, you can do so by logging into your NCA membership account, clicking the "my account" link at the top of the page, clicking the "purchases" tab, selecting the "events" section, clicking the "details" button next to your convention registration, selecting the "add session" button, and then selecting one (or both) of the Day of Service sessions from the available sessions. For more information, please contact the [Convention Team](#).

Add a Short Course or Preconference to Your Convention Schedule

Preconferences take place on Wednesday, November 13. These half-day or full-day sessions present an opportunity for scholars to enjoy a deep dive and are a fantastic means of networking with like-minded scholars and an easy way to efficiently explore unfamiliar topics. For more information, including registration requirements, please visit the [Preconferences webpage](#).

Short Courses provide convention attendees with a unique, pedagogically focused experience. These extended sessions are educational in nature and offer participants an opportunity to explore or reexamine a teaching or research area. Courses are led by experienced practitioners, including some leading researchers and textbook authors. For more information, please visit [NCA Convention Central](#).

Preconferences are free for all registered attendees this year. Short Courses are \$10 for NCA student members and \$20 for all other attendees and take place Thursday-Saturday of the convention. Short Course and Preconference registrations can be included in your convention registration. If you have already registered for the convention, you can still register online for a Preconference or a Short Course by logging into the [NCA website](#), clicking the "my account" link at the top of the page, clicking the "purchases" tab, selecting the "events" section, clicking the "details" button next to your convention registration, selecting the "add session" button, and then selecting the Short Course or Preconference you wish to add to your registration. If you are a convention volunteer and wish to add a Short Course or Preconference, please contact the [Convention Team](#).

Newcomer's Welcome and Orientation

All attendees who are attending the NCA Annual Convention for the first time are encouraged to attend the [NCA Newcomer's Welcome and Orientation](#) session. The session will be Thursday, November 14, 8:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. in Key Ballroom 7 of the Hilton. NCA leaders will be on hand to welcome you, give a brief overview of the convention and the association, and answer questions. Representatives from a few of the NCA Interest Groups will also share information.

Advance Registration Deadline

The Advance Registration Deadline is Saturday, November 9. Please remember that all presenters are expected to register for the convention. Membership must be current through December 1, 2019 to qualify for the discounted member registration rates. Attendees who register after the November 9 deadline will do so at a higher rate. For more information, visit the [Registration Information](#) webpage.

NCA Code of Conduct

When registering for the convention, all attendees agree to an [Anti-Harassment Code of Conduct](#) to support the safety and security of all convention attendees. NCA has contracted with a human resources professional who will be onsite during the convention to address violations of this Code of Conduct. To report a concern, please email codeofconduct@natcom.org. This e-mail is not monitored outside of the convention. Please note, if you experience or witness behavior that constitutes an immediate or serious threat to public safety, or if you believe you may have been physically assaulted during the convention, please dial 911 and report the incident to law enforcement officials.

All Gender Restroom

All-gender restrooms are available for attendees to utilize regardless of gender identity or expression. The designated restroom in the Baltimore Convention Center is located on the 300 level near room 341. The designated restroom in the Hilton is located on the second floor near Key Ballroom 9. The facilities are marked with signage at the entrance. If you have any questions about the facilities, please contact the [Convention Team](#).

Special Use Rooms at the Convention

Two rooms at the convention have been designated for special use. One room at the Baltimore Convention Center has been designated as a private area for lactation purposes. If you need to utilize this room, please go to the NCA Registration Desk to sign for a room key. The room must remain locked at all times for security purposes. The Baltimore Convention Center also has a nursing room, located on the 300 level.

Armistead, located on the second floor of the Hilton, has been reserved as a private quiet area for attendees. This room should not be used for meetings, phone calls, interviews, etc. If you have any questions about the facilities, please contact the [Convention Team](#).

Safety Tips for Baltimore

We encourage all convention attendees to follow the following safety tips when traveling around Baltimore:

- Use the buddy system by walking in groups or with a friend or colleague, especially at night.
- Stick to well-lit and well-traveled streets and be aware of your surroundings. Keep your eyes up and not on your phone.
- Communicate your plans or itinerary to others.
- Be conscious of your belongings when exploring the city and attending sessions. Do not leave your belongings unattended, even in NCA sessions.
- Remove your Annual Convention badges and leave your convention tote bags back at the hotel while exploring the city.

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