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# Retail Education Today

## President's Corner

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Fall is here!

### Back to the Past – What Can the Past Tell us About the Future of the Retail Environment?

Before talking about the past, there are many exciting activities planned for this year. The AMS/ACRA Triennial Conference “Retailing 2009: Strategic Challenges and Opportunities in Uncertain Times” in New Orleans is quickly approaching. Even if you did not submit a paper, the conference promises to be an exciting time. Join us for a “taste” of New Orleans.

As most of you are quite familiar, unlike what was previously announced (and included in the last Newsletter), the proposed merger between NRF and RILA was cancelled. Regardless, next year will be the final year that the NRF (and hence, the ACRA winter conference) will be meeting in New York! Beginning in 2011, the NRF convention will be held in Washington DC. So, make plans today to attend the NRF Convention/ACRA Winter Conference in January for the final NRF meeting in New York!

ACRA Spring Conference 2010 will return to Or-

lando in June. A part of the conference will consist of attending the Retailing Smarter Conference sponsored by the University of Florida. Make plans today to partake in what will prove to be another exciting conference, and spend some extra time in Florida to take advantage of what Orlando has to offer.

The new school brings



new activities for the students of ACRA members. The fourth annual ACRA Charrette, for instance, is scheduled for March 8 through March 13 under the leadership of Claudis Mobley and the Center for Retailing Excellence at the University of Arkansas. Encourage your students to attend today! Furthermore, watch your inboxes for information which will be forthcoming on the undergraduate

competition.

### Back to the Past

Change. If anything is consistent with the retail environment during the past year, it is change. Change is difficult to deal with. Which changes are temporary? Which changes are permanent? Which changes are parts of an evolutionary process – representing an initial step in a series of changes? These questions are not easily answered, but the answers will directly affect the long term success or even the survival of many retailers. Although not a perfect crystal ball by any means, the past can often provide insight into the future for at least some of the changes being observed. Looking at history for clues for the future will be the focus of this issue's President's Corner. My goal is not necessarily to provide answers, but instead to prompt discussion on the future of retailing.

### Consumers

Everywhere we look, we see stories that consumers have undergone a number of profound changes which will permanently change the na-

# President's Corner, Continued

ture of retailing. Some of the changes being discussed include 1) the increasing price sensitivity of consumers, and 2) a diminished demand for pricy, image-oriented products. Let's look at both areas and look for signs for what the future will hold.

One of the most pronounced changes in consumers over the past quarter century has been an increasing price sensitivity. Although the trend has tended to be especially pronounced during times of economic downturn, it was a trend which has existed independent of the economy and which has followed by individuals at all income levels. The rationale for this change has not been the lack of income, instead price sensitivity has been viewed as a means to extend one's income – a dollar's savings equates to a \$1.20-\$1.50 increase in disposable income (after taxes). Although household incomes have been increasing during much of this time, much of the additional "income" derived from price savings went into housing and into luxury and "near-luxury" automobiles. There is no reason to expect that this trend will cease in the future. Hence, discount and off-price retailers can be expected to continue to prosper in the future as will private brands.

It is harder to expect that demand for pricy, image-oriented products has ended. Yes, the demand for such products has fallen dramatically, but such temporary sales declines are typical for economic downturns. Once the economy rebounds, so do the sales of pricy, image-oriented products. As a response to sales declines during the economic downturns of the 1970s and early 1980s, for instance, numerous individuals predicted that the sales of pricy, image-oriented products would never rebound. Predictions abounded that the average house size would continue to shrink and that the future of luxury automobiles was bleak. The vision for the 1980s and the 1990s consisted of the population migrating to small inner-city housing units while driving small econoboxes with standard transmissions. Those predictions were obviously false. Similar predictions for the 2010s and 2020s will also likely prove to be incorrect. Once incomes and consumer confidence rebounds, there is no reason to expect that consumers' demand for pricy, image-oriented products will not similarly rebound. Indeed, given research suggesting that individuals base much of their self-image on the products they possess, we can expect the trend toward pricy, image-oriented products will not only rebound, but also return to its previous growth rate.

***“Once the economy rebounds, so do the sales of pricy, image-oriented products”***

## Economy

The economy may be more difficult to forecast. Clearly, the economy is not going to immediately rebound to 1990s/2000s levels. Demographics have long suggested that the growth rates experienced during the 2010s will be restrained (similar to the demographic effect during the 1970s). More difficult to predict, however, is the impact which governmental actions will have on the economy. Besides the usual unpredictable nature of governmental actions, actions during the 12 months have placed us into a situation for which there is no comparable time in history. The degree to which the national debt has grown (e.g., from the bailout and acquisition of failing firms, rescuing financial institutions from problems caused in part by federal regulations, funding a nearly trillion dollar "stimulus plan" which even the CBO concludes produces a net loss of jobs) will necessitate action, but what will it be? Will the government monetize the debt (leading to hyperinflation) or will the government significantly raise taxes (leading to lower investment and postponing economic recovery)? Furthermore, if the proposed health care package passes, from where will the addition trillion dollars of funding come? Where is the economy is going in the future is anyone's guess.

## Technology

The price of passive RFID tags has fallen below the 1-cent mark (even under rather modest production volumes). Furthermore, continuing improvements in data-mining abilities (e.g., dunn-humby) bode well for retailers. Several possible "dark clouds," however, exist on the horizon. The present government is wary of the quantity of information possessed by retailers. Will this wariness result in action? Possibly a more important concern is how will consumers react to the increasing personal tracking by the government? With RFID-tagged drivers' licenses, cars with "black boxes," government calls for groups of individuals to be personally RFID-tagged (e.g., individuals with specific illness and children), and the proposals to make GPS mandatory in all automobiles to facilitate tracking by the government, will consumers become increasingly privacy wary? If so, will their reactions be directed primarily toward retailers?

## Competition

Unquestionably, the degree of competition existing in many sectors of retailing has been increasing. How long

*Continued on page 3*

## President's Corner, Continued

will many of the "marginal" players continue to survive? If Kmart closes, will anyone notice? If Sears closes, how will mall managers/owners deal with the loss of another anchor store? Macys seems to be surviving by attracting Target customers. What about Target? Is it just me, or is Target increasingly looking like Kmart in the mid-1980s? After years of success, Target has been facing challenging times of late and I don't believe the news stories tracing the causes solely to the fashion-nature of offerings. The ethics problems and various gaffes from Target have been growing like a snowball rolling down a mountain. Indeed, a blogger on Consumerist has recently suggested that Consumer Reports should develop a separate blog to account of the myriad of ethics problems and gaffes identified at Target. Also, instead of getting onto the "green bandwagon" in a meaningful way, Target seems content to merely levy attacks on the "green" activities at Walmart. Doesn't this eerily remind one of Kmart in the 1980s who, instead of materially dealing with the Walmart threat, merely levied attacks on Walmart and funded Walmart protesters instead of providing an offering which was more attractive to their customers? Will Target be able to refocus, or are we seeing the downfall of Kmart all over again, just in the guise of Target?

I fear that several retailers do not have a good idea of what the future will hold, and I fear that several will not survive. Are we passing that information to our students? Can they make meaningful, accurate assessments of the future and do they possess the skills to productively utilize this information in the marketplace?

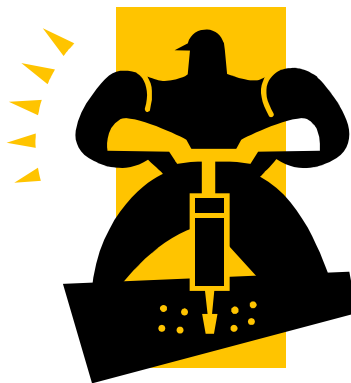
### Conclusion

I hope that everyone has a good school year. Remember, ACRA is your association and its success is dependent on the activities of its members. Please contact me or any the ACRA officers if you would like to become more involved. The future of retailing lies in the hands of retail managers. Through your activities as a retail instructor and your activities as an ACRA member, you, in turn personally hold the future retail managers in your hands.

*David Burns*

Xavier University

## Coming Your Way Soon...



### The ACRA Undergraduate Retail Competition

is under construction! Details will be sent to members via email.

## AMS/ACRA 2009 Fall Triennial Retailing Conference

Hilton Riverside Hotel—2 Poydras Street, New Orleans LA 71049  
(504) 561-0500; (800)-HILTONS ([www.riversidemeetings.com](http://www.riversidemeetings.com))  
September 30, 2009-October 3, 2009

### Conference Tentative Program

Sept. 30—Oct. 3, 2009

#### Wednesday, September 30

- Registration
- Wine Tasting Welcome Reception
- Dinner (on your own)

#### Thursday, October 1

- Morning Sessions
- Lunch at Harrah's Casino
- Walking tour of Fulton Street
- Presentation by Harrah's on database marketing
- Afternoon Sessions
- Dinner at New Orleans Cooking School

#### Friday, October 2

- Morning Sessions
- Lunch at Mother's Restaurant
- Afternoon Sessions
- Grazing Dinner at Louisiana Museum of Southern Food and Beverage

#### Saturday, October 3, 2009

- Morning Sessions
- Conference ends at noon (no lunch provided)

**Note: Unless otherwise noted, all events are included in registration fee.**

## Destination: New Orleans

The AMS/ACRA 2009 Fall Triennial Retailing Conference will be held September 30—October 3, 2009 at the Hilton Riverside, the largest hotel in New Orleans.

The Hilton Riverside is connected to the Riverwalk Shopping Center and to the New Orleans Convention Center. The Aquarium of the Americas, Harrah's Casino and the Canal Place Shopping Center are within one block of the hotel

The conference fee of \$290 **will include all sessions, Proceedings, lunches, and all din-**

**ners (except Wednesday September 30<sup>th</sup>).** We have also negotiated a very favorable rate of

\$139 a night – This rate is available for three days before and after the conference.



**MARKETING INTELLIGENCE & PLANNING SPECIAL ISSUE**

Each track chairperson will recommend one to three papers in his/her track as suitable for inclusion in a special issue on Retail Strategy in *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*. The guest editors of the special issue:

Barry Berman, Charles McMellon, Michael Pearson, and Donna Smith will review each track chairperson's recommendation and select 6-8 papers for possible inclusion in this special issue. Authors of these articles must agree to fulfill the editorial requirements of the guest editors and to submit their revised paper as of October 15, 2009.

#### After Conference Activities

You are certainly encouraged to spend an extra day or two before or after the conference. There are all the great restaurants, music, festivals and events.

## Join Us in New Orleans!

New Orleans welcomes visitors with genuine hospitality and promises an experience that will not be forgotten.

For those that come to the AMS/ACRA 2009 Fall Triennial Retailing Conference, in addition to the great conference program, there will be plenty to see

and do. For example, the historic French Quarter is comprised of over 100 square blocks of art, dining, shopping, entertainment and architectural treasures. The city is known for music....no city loves music more than New Orleans. The rhythms fill the streets,

clubs, churches and concert halls. Don't miss a beat! And the food - experience America's most delicious city! You'll wonder why everyone doesn't celebrate life this way. Come and join retailing colleagues for a great conference in a delightful environment!

## Make Plans to Attend: 2010 Winter ACRA Conference Held In Conjunction with the 2010 NRF Convention and Exposition



# Opportunity.

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York City  
Convention: January 10-13, 2010  
EXPO & DESIGN STUDIO: January 11-12, 2010



The “must attend” event for retailers from around the world is quickly approaching. The National Retailing Federation 98th Annual Convention and EXPO, better known internationally as the Retail’s BIG Show will take place January 10—13, 2010 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City. The show attracts more decision-making retail executives than any other even of its kind. It’s a chance for ACRA professors to join retail practitioners and renew and make new friendships. The website for the event is

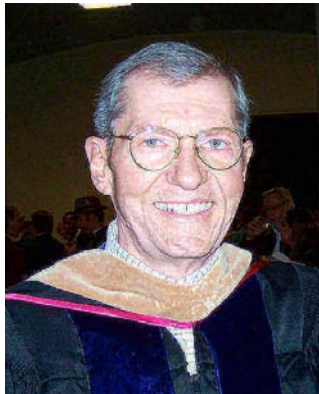
<http://events.nrf.com/annual2010/public/enter.aspx>

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## Farewell to a Friend

Dr. Barrent Ryder "Bart" Kittle, 62, passed away January 16, 2009 in Hospice House. Since 1994, Bart had been an associate professor at Youngstown State University in the Williamson College of Business Administration's Marketing Department. He was a member and past president of Phi Kappa



Sigma fraternity, a member of the executive council and social chairman; his professional affiliations included the American Collegiate Retailing Association and the American Advertising Federation. Bart is known for the annual report on Holiday Sales which was published in *Retail Education Today*.

## Call for Papers - Retail Education Today

*Retail Education Today (RET)* is inviting ACRA members to submit completed papers related to retailing. The papers will be double blind reviewed and those selected will be published. At least one author must be a member of ACRA. Membership applications are available online at <http://acraretail.org/>. Abstracts will not be considered for review. Papers submitted must not have

been published, accepted for publication or under consideration for publication elsewhere. Authors of accepted papers must submit the final paper by the specified deadline. Submit manuscripts for consideration to Denise Ogden ([dto2@psu.edu](mailto:dto2@psu.edu)). RET is a quarterly publication of ACRA and is listed in *Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Marketing*.

## ACRA Charrette: Host School Announcement



# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

The Center for Retailing Excellence at the University of Arkansas is excited to be hosting the 4<sup>th</sup> annual ACRA Charrette. The dates for the 2010 Charrette are Monday March 8<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. This will be a week of hard work and lots of fun. Monday there will be a welcome reception; Tuesday through Thursday will be meetings with the client, industry experts and work days. Friday will be the team presentations, followed by an award reception and finally Saturday everyone is invited to attend the Saturday morning meeting at Wal-Mart's home office.

A Charrette is a real-world business competition, where students from multi-disciplines (marketing, retailing, business administration, finance, accounting, product development, interior design, etc.) come together to solve a complex business problem. Experiential Learning Opportunities of Charrette

Last years Charrette was hosted by David F. Miller Center for Retailing Education and Research at the University of Florida. Students from 12 universities (the University of Florida, Indiana University, the University of Arkansas, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Georgia Southern University, Florida State University, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Albright College, Michigan State University, Tampa Art Institute, Ryerson University in Canada and Brunel University in UK) in multi-disciplines (marketing, retailing, finance, merchandising, product development, interior design, etc.) worked together intensely to reach a resolution for a challenge presented by a client, Ron Jon Surf Shop. The challenge was to develop a business plan for opening a new store in Destin, FL (marketing / communication / merchandising / financial plan) and design a retail environment that embodies the brand image of a retail client and optimizes the opportunities that Ron Jon Surf Shop can provide in a new location.

Early fundraising for participating students at each school is strongly recommended. Please visit <http://www.acraretail.org/> to view last year's winning presentations.

### IMPORTANT DATES

January 11, Last Day for Application Submission

January 18, Notification of Final Selects

February 1, Last day for Fee Payment



For more information you can contact Sarah Jensen at [sjensen@uark.edu](mailto:sjensen@uark.edu) or +1 (479)575-7095.

# Call For Papers



Conference or Publication	Due Date	Description	Contact
<p>Intellectbase International Consortium Academic Conferences</p> <p>Las Vegas, NV - USA December 17-19, 2009</p>	Nov 20	<p>Full Papers, Research-in-Progress, Extended Abstracts, Workshops, Case Studies and Posters are invited!! All submitted papers are peer reviewed by the Reviewers Task Panel (RTP) and accepted papers are published in a refereed conference proceeding. Outstanding articles that are recommended to the Executive Editorial Board (EEB) have a higher chance of being published in one of the double-blind reviewed Journals listed on the Intellectbase International Consortium website:</p> <p><a href="http://www.intellectbase.org">www.intellectbase.org</a></p>	<p>For more information concerning Intellectbase International Consortium conferences and Journal publications, please visit the Intellectbase website at <a href="http://www.intellectbase.org">www.intellectbase.org</a>. For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Conference Chair at <a href="mailto:chair@intellectbase.org">chair@intellectbase.org</a>. <b>Email all papers to:</b> <a href="mailto:reviewers@intellectbase.org">reviewers@intellectbase.org</a></p>
<p>The European Regional Science Association</p> <p>17th international conference on Recent Advances in Retailing and Services Science</p> <p>July 2-5, 2010</p> <p>Istanbul - Turkey</p>	Oct 1	<p>The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars from various disciplines and countries interested in retailing and consumer services. Over the years the conference has attracted scholars from disciplines such as marketing, psychology, urban planning, transportation, management, geography etc from across the world. The conference will give delegates an opportunity to present their completed projects but also to present work in progress.</p>	<p>For more information:</p> <p><a href="http://www.ersa.org/home/article/call-for-papers-retailing-tourism">http://www.ersa.org/home/article/call-for-papers-retailing-tourism</a></p>
<p>7<sup>th</sup> International Conference for Consumer Behaviour, Tourism and Retailing Research</p> <p>Estoril/ Lisbon Portugal</p> <p>7th - 9th April 2010</p>	<p>Abstract Oct 26, 2009</p> <p>Full Papers Jan 25 2010</p>	<p>The conference has two goals. The first goal is to provide an international environment for different academic/professional approaches and discussions on recent development in consumer behaviour and retailing theory/practice in contemporary turbulent business arena. The second goal is to provide the opportunity for young scholars, practitioners and PhD students to have their work validated and benchmarked within the benevolent academic and professional community of colleagues from different international contexts.</p>	<p>All abstracts and final papers should be submitted in English, checked for correct grammar and spelling, both a hard copy and e-mailed to <a href="mailto:g.vignali@mmu.ac.uk">g.vignali@mmu.ac.uk</a> in Microsoft Word format.</p>

**FULL TEXT on CALL FOR PAPERS available at [www.acraretail.org](http://www.acraretail.org)**

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*Submit address changes to JungKun Park, ACRA Treasurer. Do not send changes of address to the editor of Retail Education Today!*

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*Position listings, ads and feature articles can be submitted for review at anytime. Send submissions in electronic format to the editor.*

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