

LITERACY NEWS



FLORIDA LITERACY COALITION, INC.

FLORIDA'S NEWSLETTER FOR LITERACY TUTORS,
TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND SUPPORTERS

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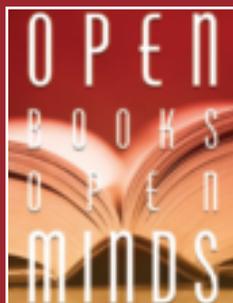
Winter 2007

Register Now!

**2007 Florida Literacy
Conference**

May 2-4, Orlando

See page 4 for details.



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New Questions Unveiled for US Citizenship Test

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently announced the release of 144 questions and answers for the pilot test of a new naturalization exam. USCIS will administer the pilot exam to about 5,000 volunteer citizenship applicants in 10 cities, including Miami, Florida, beginning in early 2007.

In an effort to make the citizenship test for immigrants more meaningful, the new test requires a more substantive understanding of U.S. history and government institutions and includes questions that focus on the concepts of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. For example, no longer will it be sufficient to know the three branches of government (executive, legislative and judicial); applicants will also be asked why there are three branches of government.

During the past 10 years, the standardization and meaningfulness of the naturalization test has come under scrutiny. Various studies found that the exam lacked standardized content, standardized instruments, protocol and scoring system. Inconsistencies were reported in the way the exams were administered nationwide, and there was no assessment of whether applicants had a meaningful understanding of U.S. history and government.

The new civic questions will be given orally to immigrants who volunteer to take the new draft test. The redesign is aimed at making sure applicants know the meaning behind some of America's fundamental institutions.

USCIS, part of the Department of Homeland Security, worked over 5 years to redesign the test. The agency, which processes approximately 1 million citizenship applications annually, field-tested a similar effort, but it failed and was scuttled.

A variety of groups with varying ideologies about immigration have been working with USCIS to advise the agency on drafting the questions. Immigration advocates want to ensure that the new test does not make becoming a citizen more difficult, while groups that want to control immigration want to ensure newcomers are not simply memorizing information.

The pilot will allow USCIS to work out problems and refine the exam, narrowing the questions to 100, before it is fully implemented nationwide in early 2008.

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Ruth Colvin Awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom

Adult literacy advocate Ruth Colvin was honored by President George W. Bush on December 15 with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award.

Colvin founded Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA) 44 years ago after learning that more than 11,000 adults in her home community of Syracuse, NY could read only at the lowest level of literacy. LVA trains volunteers in simple, learner-centered methods to teach reading. In 2001, LVA merged with Laubach Literacy International to create ProLiteracy Worldwide, the world's largest adult basic education and adult literacy organization. Colvin still serves on ProLiteracy's board of directors.

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Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center

Literacy in Florida

FLC Welcomes New Interns

The Florida Literacy Coalition is pleased to welcome Lindsey Mace and Christy Poppy as our new event planning interns. Lindsey is currently a senior at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management. Upon graduation in August of 2007, she plans to further her education by getting her masters in Business Management, before beginning a career as a meeting/event planner.



*New Interns Christy Poppy (L) and
Lindsey Mace*

Christy Poppy is a junior at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management. She is currently studying Event Management and plans on graduating in December of 2007. Upon graduation, she plans on earning a masters degree in either non-profit management or an MBA where she will then pursue a career in Event/Meeting Planning in the Washington, DC Area.

Fundraising Idea: Cartoons and Cocktails

By Judy Conte, Executive Director, Volusia Literacy Council

Every fall for the past three years, the Volusia Literacy Council has held an event featuring well-known cartoonists. This past year the event was called "Cartoons and Cocktails." This event features cartoonists from around the state and nation who give of their time and talents in support of our literacy program. We are so appreciative of what they do for us. It is the only event in this area of this type. The *Daytona Beach News-Journal* is the presenting sponsor and many other businesses support our efforts.

In an effort not to replicate the myriad of "galas" in our community, the event is held on a Friday evening and features heavy hors d' oeuvres. The atmosphere is casual and is conducive to mingling. It is designed to be the perfect event for the end of a busy week for the attendees. Each corporate sponsor provides a cartoonist to join its table for the evening. The evening's silent auction contains original cartoon art that has been innovatively framed by a local framing company.

A favorite of those in attendance is "Dueling Cartoonists." The cartoonists each have an easel at which they draw rapidly, competitively producing as many pieces as they can. They often draw on one another's work, which makes for interesting combinations. The cartoonists also will draw pieces at the request of the attendees. All these works are given to those in attendance for a donation to the Literacy Council.

For additional information you may contact Judy Conte at Volusia Literacy Council, (386) 255-8723 or judy-vlc@juno.com.



Submit Your News

Has your organization received funding or planned a major public event? Do you know something that would benefit other adult and family literacy practitioners? Share it with us!

FLC invites you to submit short articles and other news items related to funding, events, staff, hot topics, research and more. Contact Kelley Jain, Education & Training Coordinator, at jaink@floridaliteracy.org or (407) 246-7110 x 203.



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