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## ***A Letter from the President***

Dear Fellow Three Rivers TESOL Members,

It's been an exciting year for Three Rivers TESOL. We installed enthusiastic new board members, continued to have the strong support of continuing board members, and had a well-attended Spring Meeting and a very successful Fall Conference. I was particularly pleased to see a wide variety of participants at the Fall Conference from K-12 teachers to graduate students to adult educators. Thank you to everyone who participated in Three Rivers TESOL this year.

Our annual Spring Meeting is just around the corner. It will be on May 5, 2007 from 10am-12pm at Allegheny Intermediate Unit on Forbes Avenue. We're planning to have a panel discussion this year dealing with ELL reading instruction. We also have several openings for our board. Please consider joining the Three Rivers TESOL Board of Directors. Elections will be held immediately after the panel discussion.

As I move on to my position of Past President I will continue to assist the organization in its goal to guarantee that the Three Rivers TESOL affiliate is serving the needs of all members. Please let us know how we can help you. If you have ideas about direction you would like to see the organization take, send an email to me or another board member. We welcome and value your opinions.

I look forward to seeing you at the Three Rivers TESOL Spring Meeting!

Allegra Elson

E-Mail: [president@3rtesol.org](mailto:president@3rtesol.org)

<http://www.3rtesol.org>

## **Joan Lucas Memorial Scholarship**

Joan Lucas was a local international education professional. Sadly, Joan died on January 23, 2007 after a courageous battle with cancer.

Many of us in ESL and NAFSA in Pittsburgh knew Joan. She completed an MA in Linguistics/TESOL at Pitt in the 1980s. Joan worked many years as an international student advisor, both at Pitt and ELS at Point Park; she also taught at Pitt's ELI and at ELS at Point Park. Joan had a beautiful singing voice and made singing her hobby -- she sang in many local choirs and vocal groups.



Friends of Joan's in ESL and international student advising would like to remember her with a scholarship. The Board of 3RT has kindly agreed to handle the scholarship and choose an awardee. We would like to sponsor a local ESL teacher to attend the 2008 TESOL conference in New York City.

Our preferred awardee will be a part-time ESL teacher working in the Pittsburgh area. We hope to be able to pay at least for conference registration, transportation and possibly hotel. Details will be in the Fall 3RT newsletter.

If anyone would like to contribute to the Joan Lucas Memorial Scholarship, please send donations to:

Dorolyn Smith  
2816 Cathedral of Learning  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

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## **Changes to the U.S. Citizenship Test**

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently announced they are changing the test section of the naturalization process. In most ESL classes, we teachers have a large percentage of immigrants. As their teachers, we should be aware of how the changes will affect our students. As you probably know, the process to become an American citizen is very long, expensive and quite a challenge for most, regardless of linguistic ability.

First, we all know that rumors spread *faster* than wildfire in the immigrant community. So I will try to give you all facts as I have. (Continued on the next page)

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**Why a new test?** According to the USCIS fact sheet, the old test had been under review for several years. They looked particularly at whether the test was administered in a standard manner throughout the country. The result was a finding of a wide disparity in the tests nationwide. In 2000, a redesign project was begun to right some of these problems, with input from government, history and ESL experts.

**What has changed?** There are two main changes. The first is that all the questions will be at similar linguistic levels, nationwide. The idea behind that was if an immigrant takes the test in New York, LA or in Pittsburgh, there would be no significant difference.

The second change will be the harder change for our students to bear. Previously, students with limited English knowledge could memorize questions and answers, without actually understanding the substance, relying on recognizing the sound patterns. This worked fine when the question involved the colors on the flag.

However, the new test will revolve around the “fundamental concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.” This could prove to be a major challenge to our students.

The test will continue to have a reading and writing portion, along with 10 civics questions. There will be a master list of 100 new questions that the students can study from. Remind your students that these are “new” questions, and they will have to get the updated questions.

**When will the new test start?** The pilot test started in February of 2007 in 10 cities around the country (none in this area). They will use these sites to fine-tune the test, and the USCIS hopes to have full implementation some time in 2008.

- Martin Senger (GECAC)

For more information, visit the following links:

- U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) - [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
  - Questions and Answers for New Pilot Naturalization Test - [www.uscis.gov/natzpilot](http://www.uscis.gov/natzpilot)
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# 3RT Spring Meeting

**Topic: *ELL Reading Instruction: K-12, Adult Ed, Academic, & Professional***

**Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am – 12pm**

at

**Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU)**

**1401 Forbes Avenue**

**Suite 225**

**Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

\*Please sign-in at the front desk upon entering the building.

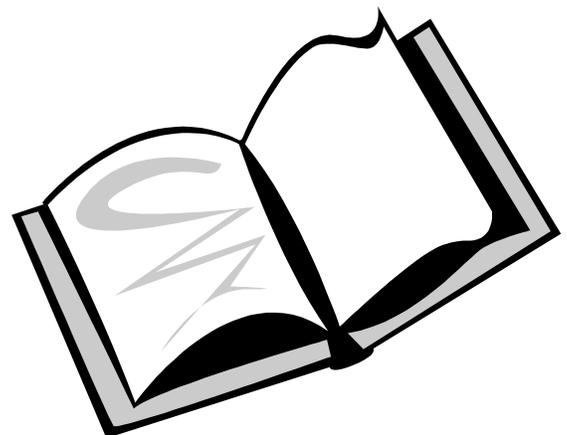
**Bus Information**

Located on the 61 and 71 PAT bus routes.

**Parking Information**

Free parking is available in front of the building on a first-come, first-served basis. In addition, there are many metered spots close by (enforced until 6pm) – they cost 25 cents for 30 minutes.

The Mercy Hospital garage directly across the street from AIU is also an option, but you must go inside to pay.



## **2007 Fall Conference Information**

The annual Three Rivers TESOL Fall Conference will take place September 29, 2007 at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, in Indiana, PA (approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes from Pittsburgh).

This year's theme is '*Linking Theory to Practice.*' Proposals will be accepted from May 1 – September 7, 2007.

More information will be available in upcoming newsletters and on our website – [www.3rtesol.org](http://www.3rtesol.org)

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## **About IUP**

Nestled in the rolling hills of Western Pennsylvania about 45 Northeast of Pittsburgh is one of the best-kept secrets in English, Composition, and TESOL graduate studies – Indiana University of Pennsylvania. With both masters and doctoral programs offering a variety of courses and specializations, and an international student body representing a number of cultures and academic backgrounds, IUP is proud to host the 2007 Three Rivers TESOL conference.

With one of the largest doctoral programs in English composition and the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (C&T) and originally established in 1976, IUP's programs emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of both composition and TESOL education. This emphasis allows students to explore both disciplines while also providing the flexibility to study in related fields such as literature, administration, and/or research methodology. IUP's C&T doctoral programs are designed to help educators from a variety of settings develop plans of study suited to their teaching and scholarly interests. With a well-published, expert faculty and a friendly, down to earth atmosphere, IUP welcomes you to Indiana and looks forward to hosting another dynamic meeting of minds.

To further explore IUP and its English graduate programs, please visit:

**[www.english.iup.edu/graduate](http://www.english.iup.edu/graduate)**

- Marlen Elliot Harrison, MA (IUP)

## **Mark your calendars!**

**What:** 3RT Spring Meeting,  
Topic – ELL Reading Instruction:  
K-12, Adult Ed, Academic, &  
Professional

**When:** Saturday, May 5, 2007,  
10am-12pm

**Where:** Allegheny Intermediate  
Unit (AIU), near Duquesne University  
and Mercy Hospital

*More information on Page 4!*



Three Rivers  
TESOL

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Questions?  
Comments?

Contact information  
for all officers can  
be found on our  
website!

*Visit us at:*

**[www.3rtesol.org](http://www.3rtesol.org)**