

The  
International  
**DYSLEXIA**  
Association® **Florida Branch**  
Dyslexia Research, Education & Advocacy

[www.IDAFLA.org](http://www.IDAFLA.org)

"We serve children and adults with dyslexia and all who struggle to read . . . because reading changes lives" - IDA

## The Dyslexia Dispatch

### Celebrating the Talents of Artists with Dyslexia



*Original Artwork "Tornado Book" 03 26 2015 by Jim McCarthy*

## From the President's Desk:

**Susan Sentell,  
M.Ed.**



Hello and Happy Fall, my fellow Floridians!

Beginning a new year in school is likely to bring up personal memories for all of us. Backpacks and binders are free from rips, stains and scribble, pencils have erasers, and shiny pens and markers are bright and actually work!

At FLIDA we, too, have a fresh start after a delightful summer break! Our new members and our Board members are eager to continue working towards our substantial goals as reflected in our five-year plan which will guide our continuing growth. We have many plans emerging from that plan, including an exciting FLIDA Conference in 2017!

Since you are reading this you may know this year's IDA annual conference is being held in Orlando from October 26-29, 2016 at the Marriott World Center. What a treat for us Floridians to avoid airport travel (and fares!) and be able to more easily get ourselves there.

The last time Florida hosted the IDA annual conference was in 2009. If you attended a state, regional, or national conference, you recognize how sensational and invigorating a truly large gathering of like-minded individuals can be. Four days of speakers, networking, and exhibits remind us of our passion and why we are so passionate about dyslexia. There's no substitute for mingling with and talking to the people whose professional and personal lives revolve around a common purpose. Instead of preachin' to the choir, we can be IN it!

Now, I would be remiss as your President if I did not offer each of you a personal invitation to attend FLIDA's Social Event on October 27, Thursday evening of the IDA conference, from 8:00-9:30. Located poolside "on the green" of the hotel property, will be our "After Hours – Dessert and Champagne" event where we reconnect with old acquaintances and make new friends while enjoying a laser light show and fireworks display. But wait! There's MORE! With the purchase of an event ticket, you are automatically entered in a raffle for three great prizes: a week's time share *anywhere in the world*, a beautiful sterling silver rhodium-plated necklace with hoop earrings, and a Guy Harvey beach tote filled with treats valued over \$200. You must be present to win. Ticket sales for the Branch sponsored Social Event go directly to FLIDA, so please help us cover costs by purchasing a ticket when you register for the conference. Bring your friends!

Several informative articles as well as beautiful artwork are in this newsletter. For example, note the spotlight on Legislative updates. Florida has reached a critical stage for writing and enacting laws for our dyslexic students in public schools. This effort will require **everyone** - not just politicians, but each and every one of us. We know the impact of NOT having laws in place to support and address the needs of students with dyslexia. Please refer to the FLIDA website for some simple ways you can support this important cause. To make it easier, we have legislators' contact information as well as the wording you can use when contacting your Representative. Check it out!

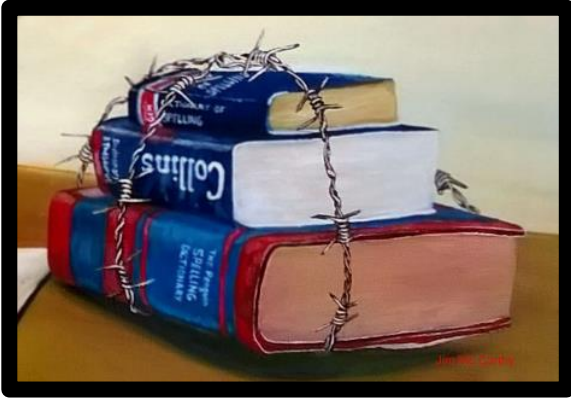
I hope to see all of you in Orlando. Please stop by the Florida booth in the Exhibit Hall to meet your volunteers and board members. You can also preview the prizes for the Social Event and get a "prize" to remind you to **Save the Date** for the next **FLIDA Conference ON Daytona Beach, September 23, 2017 at The Daytona Shores Resort & Spa!** Enjoy your new beginning!

*Sincerely,*

*Susan*



*"Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings" - Oliver Wendell Holmes*



## On the Cover:

"The WordPress blog/website I created to showcase some of my work, last year, has been viewed in 78 countries, with over 8000 hits. I put it together by watching demonstrations, as I find that I learn better through watching documentaries."

<https://artistjimmccarthy.wordpress.com/dys-art/>

<https://www.facebook.com/jim.mccarthy.370177?fref=ts>

Original Artwork "Dysgraphia" 03 26 2015 by Jim McCarthy.

## The Holism Art of Jim McCarthy

*This fall, FLIDA has received permission to feature the magnificent work of Jim McCarthy, an Artist from Ireland, whose "holism art" has traveled the globe both virtually and in reality. Its visceral quality captures the experiences of many students and adults with characteristics of dyslexia in a way that is seldom portrayed accurately. Our interview is based on email with Jim. Here is Jim's powerful story of courage and hope:*

"I have severe dyslexia, dysgraphia and A.D.D. but have also an IQ above average. Probably like a large selection of your students (Jim wrote this email to a teacher).

"I left school at 14 without any formal exams, and worked in construction as a carpenter/joiner for over 20 something years. We had a very bad recession in Ireland, and I found myself out of work for the first time. After applying for every job I could, I had no success in searching, as the lowest qualification that any of the factories, or stores were looked for, was a degree.

"I have always had a major interest in the arts and am completely self-taught. Art was my escape from the stresses of having SpLDs [Students with Specific Learning Disabilities]. Over the years I was lucky enough to have achieved in getting pieces in private and corporate collections, in Ireland, England, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, New Zealand, America and Canada. So for me to achieve a degree I decided the arts would be the best opportunity for me. I got direct entry into 2nd year, at Crawford College of Art and Design in Cork City, Ireland, as a mature student.

"The WordPress blog/website I created to showcase some of my work, last year, has been viewed in 78 countries, with over 8000 hits. I put it together by watching demonstrations, as I find that I learn better through watching documentaries." <https://artistjimmccarthy.wordpress.com/dys-art/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/jim.mccarthy.370177?fref=ts>

"The more we can educate people on the overall effects of dyslexia, highlighting the good and the challenges we have to make every day, the better! Through my work I have had some amazing correspondence from dyslexic people around the world and also from parents and partners of dyslexic people. Dyslexic people have amazing talents that are overlooked."

Quotes from Artist Jim McCarthy, via Email on 01/09/2016



## Upcoming Conferences and Events

Thursday, October 27, 2016: FLIDA Social at the Conference.

***"After Hours – Dessert & Champagne"***

8:00 – 9:30 p.m.

Poolside “on the green”

Fireworks & Laser Light Show

Fabulous Raffle included in the Price of Ticket

**Buy your FLIDA Social Ticket when you Register for the IDA Conference!**

**Register Now**

Purchase of your FLIDA Branch Social Ticket automatically enters you into our drawing!

**Our exclusive FLIDA Raffle prizes include:**

One Week Vacation ANYWHERE in the World,

Exquisite 20 inch sterling silver, rhodium-plated necklace with hoop earrings (\$300 value),

Chic Guy Harvey beach bag full of Florida fun (\$200 value).

**You MUST be present to win.**

Buy your FLIDA Social Ticket when you register at [www.dyslexiaida.org/conference](http://www.dyslexiaida.org/conference) !

### IDA Annual Reading, Literacy & Learning Conference

67th Annual Conference  
for Professionals

5th Annual Conference  
for Families

Marriott Orlando World Center • October 26-29, 2016

**TeamQuest**  
Until *everyone* can read.

Are you a runner or do you know someone who is? Join Florida IDA in supporting TeamQuest! TeamQuest is a world-wide fund raising campaign, in partnership with the Rock ‘n’ Roll Charity Partner Program, to support children and adults with dyslexia. Registered TeamQuest runners will gain entry into the Savannah, GA or Las Vegas, NV Full and Half Marathons or Virtual Participation to raise money in support of dyslexia! Not a runner? Be a virtual participant or support someone who is!

Learn more at <http://teamquestdyslexia.org/>.



**All Roads  
Lead to  
Teacher  
Professional  
Development**



**The Professional's Perspective**

**Louisa Cook Moats, Ed.D.  
Member: Council of Advisors  
International Dyslexia Assoc.**

**September 2016**

## **Why I Use the “D” Word ... Dyslexia**

Louisa Moats, Ed.D.

Henry Ward Beecher once said, a word is a “peg to hang ideas on.” A single word can conjure a host of meanings and associations. “Dyslexia” is such a word.

In the last couple of years, the well-known and respected researchers Julian Elliott and Elena Grigorenko have been arguing that it is time to do away with the “D word.” In *The Dyslexia Debate* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), they object to the word because many misunderstandings, false claims, and myths are associated with it. For example, say Elliott and Grigorenko, dyslexia is often characterized as an obscure disorder of the visual system that produces symbolic reversals and that affects brilliant (Einstein-ish) males of a privileged class. (In fact, reversals, high IQ, and visual deficits do not distinguish this type of reading difficulty.) Dyslexia is often described as a “gift” of cognition associated with problem-solving ability and creativity – although scientific evidence for such a claim is scant, and dyslexia can affect all levels of society and all levels of intellectual ability. Dyslexia is frequently treated as a unique condition requiring specialized instruction that differs in important ways from effective instruction for all students who must be taught how to read – although, again, research suggests otherwise.

Objections by critics also extend to the policies of states that have established service delivery systems for students with diagnosed dyslexia. The guidelines for identification are designed to distinguish dyslexic students from others with reading and learning difficulties and provide them with instruction by specially certified teachers. To access the services—which are funded separately from special education, school improvement grants, Title I, and general education—students must undergo individual evaluation, which can be expensive, time-consuming, and often, of questionable validity. Meanwhile, many months (or years) might have passed before students receive the interventions that should have been available to them immediately upon entering school. Furthermore, students who may be designated “Tier 2” and “Tier 3” under an RtI system, but not referred to for dyslexia evaluation, may have very similar instructional needs that are not met.

*The Dyslexia Debate* contends that the solution to problems of definition, identification, and treatment of students with reading and writing difficulties is to do away with the term *dyslexia* in favor of terms such as *developmental reading disability*. I disagree. Here's why.

The word *dyslexia* has two Greek morphemes: “dys” meaning “difficulty with” and “lex” meaning “words” or “language.” The word itself has more explanatory value than “reading disability.” Reading, spelling, and writing are language-based skills. The manifestations of dyslexia are in language-dependent functions, including the ability to parse the speech sounds in words, link them to an alphabetic symbol system, establish automatic word recognition, distinguish word meanings, and comprehend the complexities of academic language. The word itself points directly to the best remedy for all language-based reading difficulties: structured language teaching.

Second, the Greek prefix “dys” or “dis” is commonly used in scientific circles to denote an intrinsic quality or condition in an individual, rather than a condition attributed to environmental circumstances. In the case of literacy acquisition, both good and poor reading skill is associated with known neurobiological and genetic correlates. The difficulties with symbolic processing exist independently of parenting skills, books in the home, family values, overall student maturity, or teaching methodologies. The term connotes a condition requiring informed intervention from knowledgeable professionals. From neuroimaging research on dyslexia we know that brains can be “normalized” or taught to perform functions that are not easy or natural for them—but only if the therapy is aligned with mainstream scientific evidence about what works best.

Third, the word *dyslexia* is used freely and interchangeably in scientific circles and has been used for about 100 years – Elliott and Grigorenko notwithstanding. The word indexes a treasure trove of interdisciplinary scientific research, books and articles that summarize that research, advocacy and support organizations that assist parents and families, and legitimate therapeutic interventions. When children and their parents are trying to cope with the symptoms of dyslexia, discovering that there is a name for these problems, that they are not alone, and that a great deal is known about the condition can provide instant relief and hope for the future.

Acceptance of the term in educational circles remains a frustratingly slow process. But we should not eject the term from our vocabularies because it is abused or misunderstood. Doing so will not solve our problems. Informed, immediate, intensive structured language teaching for all students at risk—including those for whom the term *dyslexia* has been used—should be our goal.

We still have much work to do to apply scientific understandings to the recognition and treatment of all reading difficulties, but it's possible to challenge myths without throwing out this very meaningful “D” word.

October is Dyslexia Awareness Month. For more information, visit the [International Dyslexia Association](#) and click on [IDA Fact Sheets](#). If you are headed to the IDA Annual Conference in October, we look forward to seeing you there! Remember, **You** are invited to our FLIDA Social on Thursday, October 27, 2016.

## Resource Review

### FLIDA Board Member Facilitates Dyslexia Simulation

FLIDA Board Member Dr. Pat Sekel presented a dyslexia and dysgraphia simulation in June to 12 graduate students in counseling at Stetson University. This cohort was enrolled in a Play Therapy course taught by Dr. Page Thanasiu at Stetson University. By the students' participation in this 1.5 hour simulation, they grew a much deeper appreciation of the struggles endured on a daily basis by students with dyslexia and dysgraphia.

*\*\*Did you know that you can contact FLIDA [info@idafla.org] to schedule one of these highly educational simulations? This is a great time to contact PTAs and other parent and educator organizations to schedule a simulation or other instructive and informative presentations!!\*\**

## It's election time again.

*Tricia Gerard, Contributor*

Please be sure to vote in the general election on November 8, 2016! We need everyone who cares about someone with dyslexia to call his or her FL Senator and House of Representative and inform our FL Legislators about the need for dyslexia legislation. How? Follow the "Find your FL Senator" and "Find your FL House of Representative" links. Find your:

FL Senator <https://www.flsenate.gov/senators/find>

FL Representative <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/sections/representatives/myrepresentative.aspx>

If your candidate is up for re-election, contact him/her and his/her opposition and inquire about their views/position on dyslexia legislation and education funding. **Vote accordingly!**

1. **A Universal Dyslexia Screener-**

2. **FL Dyslexia Handbook for educators & parents-** research, procedures for assessment and identification, instruction -remediation and interventions, resources.

3. **FL DOE and District Level Dyslexia Experts-** Dyslexia administrator who is an expert in multi-sensory structured language instruction, remediation, and scheduling. Supervises training of teachers, reading coaches, and interventionists, and ensures reading instruction and reading remediation is delivered with fidelity through onsite teacher observations and implementation of Assistive Technology for students with dyslexia/dysgraphia/written expression disorder.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. We hope you will help us and our children in Florida who have dyslexia, until *everyone* can read!



## Tech Talk

The best technology seamlessly levels the playing field for the user. Artist **Jim McCarthy** uses three assistive technology (A.T.) devices for his studies and his work. Jim said, “I use certain tools to help me work more efficiently. I use **Dragon Dictate**, **Read and Write Gold** and a **LiveScribe Pen**. I would recommend any of these to help dyslexics. Because I am a visual learner, I also use documentaries to learn the information I need.”

Quotation of Artist **Jim McCarthy**, from an interview with Headstrong Nation, accessed on 08/22/2016 at <http://headstrongnation.org/community/blog?page=2>

Dragon Dictation offers speech to text for individuals as well as for other settings.

<http://www.nuance.com/for-individuals/by-product/dragon-for-pc/home-version/index.htm>

The parent company for Dragon Dictation is found at: <http://www.nuance.com/index.htm>

We all have heard of SmartPhones, but have you heard of SmartPens? The Livescribe SmartPen reads aloud as it traces over text. Check it out at: <http://store.livescribe.com/smartpen.html>

Read Write Gold is a speech to text and a text to speech program that is used in many schools and universities. It is also available to individuals. <http://www.readwritegold.com/>



### Did You Know?

- **ALL HANDS ON DECK!** Do you like helping others? Meeting new people? Are you attending the annual IDA conference in Orlando this October? Did you know that FLIDA has many volunteer opportunities available the *entire* week at the annual IDA conference October 25-29 in Orlando? Whether you have an hour, four hours, one day, or multiple days to help the conference run smoothly, **WE NEED YOU!!** Let's show visitors a whole lot of Florida hospitality. Please email your interest to [info@idafla.org](mailto:info@idafla.org) and you will be sent an offering of what is needed. We look forward to meeting and getting to know you!
- *Did you know* that FLIDA is always in need of your volunteer spirit? Whether you have an hour or a day, an interest in contributing for the newsletter, web skills, fundraising, planning conferences, or any other talent you are willing to share with your dynamic Branch, we need you! Email [info@idafla.org](mailto:info@idafla.org) and let us know of your interest.
- *Did you know* there is still time to sign up as a Sponsor for our FLIDA Dessert & Champagne Social? Our Social and Sponsorship information is posted at <http://idafla.org/conference.htm>





**Are you a member of Florida IDA? Join us!**

**<https://eida.org/membership-account/membership-levels/>**

**Like us on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/FLIDASocialmedia>**

**Follow us on Twitter <https://twitter.com/FlidAmedia>**

**Contact Us: [info@idafla.org](mailto:info@idafla.org)**



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