

YOUR WEEKLY READER

[Rescuing Reading Project](#)

Thomas Nelson Community College
January 4, 2007

Spring 2007 Book Circles & The Big Read

In partnership with the Newport News Public Library System and the newly-formed Virginia Peninsula Literary Consortium, in a community reading program called [The Big Read](#), Thomas Nelson Community College's **Spring 2007 Book Circles on Friday, April 13 from 1:00-3:00 p.m.** will include Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Faculty from the Foreign Language Department have chosen North African author **Mariama Bâ's** novel in French, *Une si longue lettre* (translated into English as *So Long a Letter*) and Costa Rican author **Uriel Quesada's** story collection, *Lejos, tan lejos* in Spanish. Plans are underway for Dr. Quesada to visit the campus for the Book Circles.

Administered by the Rescuing Reading Project, the College's Book Circles are a student book club held once each semester during the regular academic year. The Big Read is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

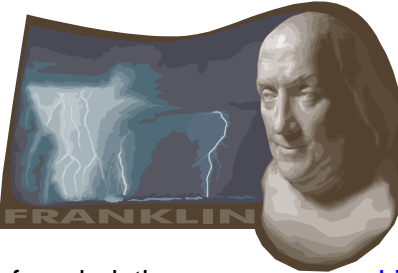
Public high school students and language arts teachers on the Virginia Peninsula have been invited to the College for the Book Circles.



New Year's Resolutions?

The practice of setting goals is not new, and students of American literature will recall that personalities as diverse as Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin had "purpose driven" lives *avant le mot*. Over a period of several years, Edwards accumulated a list of 70 resolutions; the less extravagant Franklin, a simple 13, which he applied in a daily schedule that he detailed in his autobiography and that included two hours daily for study and reading. Not bad for a small businessman.

Between Christmas and New Years, I had the opportunity while attending the Modern Language Association convention to visit the library that Franklin co-



founded, the [Library Company of Philadelphia](#), whose changing exhibit featured books from Franklin's own personal library. Founded when Franklin was only 25 (and a man of very limited means), the Library Company was the first successful public lending library. Franklin and 50 friends wanted to provide working people with the same opportunity for self-improvement that the wealthy and the aristocratic enjoyed.

What they started 275 years ago has relevance today, so I offer these as starter New Year's resolutions: 1.) Get or renew a library card. 2.) Borrow a book from the library. 3.) Read. 4.) If you're a teacher, give extra credit to students who have library cards.

"Strange How Potent Cheap Music Is"

The source of that insight, Noel Coward's literate and literary comedy *Private Lives*, will appear on the boards at [The American Theatre](#) in Hampton, January 31 and February 2, in a production by LA Theatre Works. Elyot and Amanda can't live with each other and can't live without each other. See how they work that out.



Literacy Volunteer Honored

Ruth Johnson Colvin, founder of Literacy Volunteers of America, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom earlier in December for her life's work on behalf of literacy. An [NPR interview with Colvin](#) is available in audio download.