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CONSUMER AFFAIRS CREATES NEW, MORE ACCURATE PROFESSIONAL TOUR GUIDE TEST

New Exam Educates As It Tests; Updates City Information and Raises the Bar for Visitor Experience

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra announced today the creation of a new, more accurate professional exam for the City's approximately 1,300 licensed tour guides. The new exam, written by noted New York tour guide and historian Justin Ferate, will consist of 150 thoughtful questions addressing topics ranging from historical facts about New York City neighborhoods, immigration patterns, landmarks, and architecture to identification of ethnic foods, vital transportation information and how to greet the City's throngs of visitors. The exam, which is required by law, was last updated in 1998. After a review of public comment, DCA's final proposal will be published in the City Record.

"This new exam raises the bar for a key New York City profession and industry," said DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra. "The test illustrates the best of what the City has to offer, undeniably making it a better experience for our visitors. A lot has changed in the City since 1998 and tour guides serve as the City's unofficial representatives and often are the first face a visitor may see – its crucial that they are as knowledgeable and accurate as possible."

"The Grand Central Partnership is pleased to join the Department of Consumer Affairs and Commissioner Dykstra in creating a more accurate and comprehensive tour guide examination," said Fred Cerullo, president & CEO of the Grand Central Partnership. "As one of the nation's largest business improvement districts, we run a localized tourism program that assisted more than one million neighborhood visitors in 2002. We recognize the importance of equipping the citywide tour guides with the knowledge to answer any reasonable question, cite relevant facts, and serve as a general expert on our ever-changing city. DCA's updated exam will help to ensure that."

"We thank Commissioner Dykstra and the Department of Consumer Affairs for taking this important step in safeguarding the excellence of New York City's visitor product," said Cristyne L. Nicholas, president & CEO of NYC & Company, the city's official tourism marketing organization. "Our city's tour guides, often a visitor's first introduction to New York and New Yorkers, are the best in the world. This new test will ensure that our wonderful guides maintain the highest standards possible and will contribute to the future success of the city's \$25-billion tourism industry."

Sample questions from both the current and new tests are attached.

By law, all tour guides must take an exam when applying for a license to test their knowledge of historic or public points of interest in and about the City. Under DCA's proposal, guides would be required to be re-tested if the exam is updated. Any tour guide who currently is licensed by DCA would be allowed to take the new exam for free anytime before March 31, 2004, the next



renewal date. All tour guides who apply for a new or renewed license after March 31, 2004 would be required to pay a \$50 test fee, along with the \$50 license fee.

DCA enforces the consumer protection laws, as well as other related City and State laws, at thousands of businesses throughout New York City. DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories in New York City and educates both consumers and businesses alike through free community seminars, licensing forums, and other informational materials.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM THE CURRENT TOUR GUIDE TEST:

1. The Throgs Neck Bridge connects which two boroughs:

- a) Staten Island and Manhattan
- c) Queens and the Bronx
- b) Brooklyn and Manhattan
- d) Queens and Brooklyn

2. The river east of Manhattan is the _____ river; the river west of Manhattan is the _____ river:

- a) Hudson, East
- c) Cayuga; West
- b) East; West
- d) East; Hudson

3. Which team did Lou Gehrig play for?

- a) The Brooklyn Dodgers
- c) The New York Giants
- b) The New York Jets
- d) The New York Yankees

4. Tickets cost this much for Shakespeare in the Park:

- a) \$1
- c) \$10
- b) \$5
- d) \$0

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM THE NEW, REVISED TOUR GUIDE TEST:

1. Which train will take you from Native American caves of Inwood in Manhattan to the ocean beaches of the Rockaways in Queens?

- a) IND "E" Train
- b) IND "A" Train
- c) BMT "R" Train
- d) IRT "9" Train

2. Considered to be Britain's "last romantic poet," Dylan Thomas (1914-1953) was a conundrum as a writer. He was a Welsh poet who could neither read nor write in Welsh. Having become an intrinsic part of the bohemian scene of Greenwich Village, Dylan Thomas lived only to the age of 39. The end came after a binge of almost monumental proportions. He said: "I've had 18 straight whiskies. I think that's the record." Then he collapsed. At which noted Greenwich Village watering hole did this take place?

- a) The Lion's Head
- b) Chumley's
- c) The White Horse
- d) The Corner Bistro

3. In the mid-20th century, there was a street nicknamed "Swedish Broadway." When the former Washington Market area was demolished to construct the World Trade Center, the Middle Eastern community was forced to move. With the convenience of the South Ferry, the Middle Eastern community logically moved across the water to "Swedish Broadway." Today, there is not one Swedish or Scandinavian business left on the street. In fact, Sahadi's, on this thoroughfare, is the largest importer of Middle Eastern foods in the United States. What street was formerly "Swedish Broadway" and is today the center of the Middle Eastern markets?

- a) Stuyvesant Street in St. George, Staten Island
- b) Montague Street, Brooklyn Heights
- c) Bay Street in Stapleton, Staten Island
- d) Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn

4. George Herman "Babe" Ruth was professional baseball's first great slugger and the most celebrated athlete of his time. "Babe" Ruth earned his nickname during 1914 spring training, when teammates on the minor league Baltimore Orioles referred to him as owner Jack Dunn's new "babe." As a "leftie" or a "southpaw" pitcher, Babe Ruth debuted with the Red Sox, winning 89 games in six years while setting the World Series record for consecutive scoreless innings. "The Sultan of Swat" converted to the outfield fulltime after his sale to a New York team in 1920. He then lead New York to seven American League pennants and four World Series titles. He finished with 714 home runs, leading the league 12 times, including a remarkable 60 "round trippers" just in 1927 alone. What baseball stadium in New York City is often referred to as the "House that Ruth Built?"

- a) Shea Stadium
- b) Giants Stadium
- c) Madison Square Garden
- d) Yankee Stadium



ANSWERS:

Current test samples: 1.C; 2.D; 3. D; 4. D

New test samples: 1. B; 2. C; 3. D; 4. D