

# The POINT!



E-Letter of the Western Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies  
Vol. 11 No. 8 August 2018

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## WPCSS: State of the Council 2018

### Please read!

Western Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies formed as a voluntary association of social studies educators shortly after the founding of the National Council for the Social Studies in 1920. It provided service to local teachers and acted as a clearing house for information and ideas pertinent to the social studies. Over the many years since its founding, WPCSS has had its ups and downs and has been revitalized several times.

Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies was founded in 1954, and WPCSS became associated and joined in statewide conferences. The Western Council at that time was centered in the Pittsburgh Public Schools and suburban and rural districts were often at a disadvantage when meetings occurred. Most members were city teachers. In the 60's, suburban schools were recruited.

In 1978 and again in the 1990s, reorganizations took place after brief lapses of activity due to great numbers of retirements. In 1998, WPCSS received 501c status as a non-profit organization from the IRS. Membership peaked at this time and the council was very active for a couple of years. Retirements again affected membership.

In 2008, WPCSS was the recipient of a \$10,000 bequest from the estate of Albert Goldsmith, a long time member who had maintained his membership in retirement. This allowed the council to pursue a commitment to put emphasis on local history and provide support for the local competition in National History Day at the Heinz History

(Continued on Page 2)

**IN PROMOTING OUR MISSION TO FOCUS ON LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY, WPCSS ANNUALLY PRESENTS TWO \$100 SAVINGS BONDS FOR THE BEST LOCAL OR FAMILY HISTORY EXHIBIT IN BOTH JUNIOR AND SENIOR ENTRIES OF THE LOCAL NATIONAL HISTORY DAY COMPETITION AT THE HEINZ HISTORY CENTER**

**WPCSS: State of the Council 2018**

(Continued from Page 1)

Center. WPCSS instituted the Albert Goldsmith Award for the best exhibit that focused on local or family history for both divisions (junior and senior). In addition, complementary memberships were conferred upon teacher sponsors of every category.

In the past few years, membership has declined and donations from benefactors have dried up. It is becoming difficult to continue to operate under these conditions and consideration is now underway to close the books and disband as of the end of this year on December 31. This action is still under discussion and input from members and all readers of the POINT is very much desired. This can be via e-mail or phone as traditional meetings seem to be out of style. All are welcome to comment.

**Richard Williams**, President [rwb17ff@comcast.net](mailto:rwb17ff@comcast.net) 412 828 1759

**Leo West** Sec/Treas. [wlrw@yahoo.com](mailto:wlrw@yahoo.com) 412 243 8186 (412-337-5602)



## Soldiers & Sailors Hall!

Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum houses a vast collection of primary and secondary documents and military artifacts. It is their mission to promote the use of these educational items and create an understanding for all groups who visit the museum. They provide a rich learning experience for all people by exploring the deeds and sacrifices of ordinary citizens during extraordinary circumstances.

The Education Dept. 412.621.4253 Tim Neff x 219  
<http://www.soldiersandsailorshall.org/education.html>



### Spotlight On: In Tents – Re-enactor Display Era Tents

Soldiers & Sailors Museum

Aug 9 @ 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Re-enactor Display of Military Tents from Different Eras on the Front Lawn: “In Tents” Living History Display Different Time Periods



### Spotlight On: WWI 100th Anniversary -Noretta Willig Author

#### “Carl’s Story”

Soldiers & Sailors Museum

Nov 8 @ 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

November 8: Noretta Willig, Author “Carl’s Story” Lecture & Book Signing  
 WWI 100th Anniversary of the end of WWI (November 11, 1918)



### **Destination Moon Launch Party for Educators**

Heinz History Center Thurs. Oct. 4, 2018 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Registration: To be released in August 2018

Free!

When the Apollo 11 spacecraft was preparing to launch on July 20, 1969, millions of Americans gathered around televisions and at "Moon Parties" to watch history in the making. Join the History Center's education team to kick off the opening of the *Destination Moon* exhibition with our very own Moon Party!

Educators are invited to get a closer look at the History Center's programs and outreach opportunities, including programming related to this blockbuster exhibit. The event will feature a showcase of the History Center's educational programming, trips to the moon via a mobile planetarium from the Carnegie Science Center, and other 1960s-themed activities.

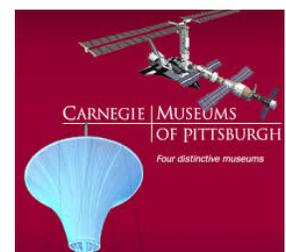
Free refreshments and a cash bar will be available.

### Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh: Home

<https://carnegiemuseums.org/>

Rejuvenate while soaking in some of Pittsburgh's most beautiful spaces.

Museum of Art & Natural History • Science Center • Andy Warhol Museum



*The Point*

Western Pennsylvania Council for the  
Social Studies

Richard Williams

President

Leo R. West

Secretary / Treasurer

*The Point* is the

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WPCSS is a non-profit 501c organization  
dedicated to promoting the teaching and  
learning of social studies in Western

Pennsylvania

Western Pennsylvania Council for the

Social Studies

c/o Leo West

11533 Clematis Blvd.

Pittsburgh, PA 15235-3105

[wlrw@yahoo.com](mailto:wlrw@yahoo.com)

Advisory Board

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### [Teaching history through game-based learning](#)

Game-based learning can help support history lessons, writes Paul Darvasi, a high-school English and media studies teacher in Toronto. In this blog post, he shares examples, including how video games can help students examine the reliability of historic primary-source documents.

[Edutopia online](#) (4/26)

### [3 engaging writing tasks for science, social studies, math](#)

Writing improves our thinking by helping us focus and organize our thoughts, which allows us to communicate more effectively and demonstrate a deeper understanding of content. That's just as important to STEM learning as it is to English language arts. But what types of writing tasks are appropriate and engaging across content areas? Reflective journals, two voices poems and social media-inspired writing prompts are three engaging ways to encourage thinking through writing in math, science and social studies.

### [Solving common student-led discussion challenges](#)

[Edutopia online](#)

Student-led discussions can present some challenges, such as unequal engagement, asserts Mark Wise, supervisor for curriculum and instruction. In this blog post, he shares common problems and potential solutions to help improve such discussions. Full Story: [Edutopia online](#)

### [A Nation at Risk Was Fake News](#)

Anya Kamenetz **recently did a story** for NPR in which she reported that the authors of *A Nation at Risk*, the famous 1983 **U.S. government report** on the nation's schools, "...never set out to undertake an objective inquiry into the state of the nation's schools." "[A]lready alarmed by what they believed was a decline in education, [they] looked for facts to fit that narrative."

### [Creating Digital Stories in Civics Class \(Video\)](#)

Digital tools allow this high school civics teacher to assess student understanding and give immediate feedback. [Watch video.](#)

*Throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted, the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most, that has made it possible for evil to triumph. -Haile Selassie, regent of Ethiopia (23 Jul 1892-1975)*

## Reviving the Manufacturing Sector, Starting in Middle School

Developed by business groups and educators, the competition helps prepare students for a reborn, higher-skilled field. [Read more.](#)

### Special Report: STEM Education



### 8 tips for teachers in the history classroom

Get to know your students and have a sense of humor, eighth-grade history teacher Lauren Brown advises in this blog post geared at soon-to-be history teachers. She shares suggestions to help the teachers engage students, including using primary sources and reading about the subjects they have to cover. [MiddleWeb \(6/10\)](#)



### Kan. high-schoolers shadow first responders

High-school students in a Kansas district are learning about the duties of on-call first responders as part of a summer program. The students have met with and shadowed firefighters and learned about community leadership and service through the program, which offers half of a social studies credit to students who complete the program. [The Morning Sun \(Pittsburg, Kan.\) \(6/26\)](#)



### Students Get 'Too Little' Civics Teaching, Principals Say

At a time of sharp political divisions, civics teaches students how to engage in civil discourse, according to school leaders interviewed for the Education Week Research Center poll. More than half said their students don't get enough of it. [Read more.](#)



### Teachers React to the Supreme Court Ruling That Ends 'Fair Share' Union Fees

Some teachers are excited about the prospect of no longer having to pay dues to their union, while others have reiterated their commitment to their union. [Read more.](#)

#### 'Janus', the Supreme Court, and Teachers' Unions: An Overview



### Pa. school elevates learning with treehouse classroom

(Pixabay)

Shady Side Academy Country Day School in Fox Chapel.

A Pennsylvania school recently opened a treehouse accessible by a suspension bridge as an outdoor learning classroom. Opened near the end of the school year, the space is not climate-controlled, but it will be used in various weather conditions to teach students out in nature.

[KDKA-TV \(Pittsburgh\)](#)

(6/27)



*A learned fool is more foolish than an ignorant one.  
Moliere, playwright, actor and poet*



## [A Merger of the Education and Labor Departments? 4 Questions Answered](#)

A new federal proposal to merge the Education and Labor Departments is on the table. In this 90-second video, *Education Week* answers four basic questions to help you get up to speed. [Read more.](#)

## [How to include 5 minutes of news in class](#)

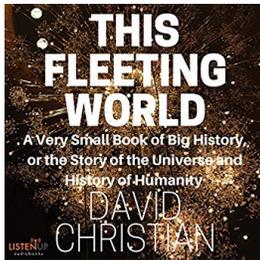
Having daily conversations about current events can help students build ties between past and present and encourage them to become active and literate citizens, teacher Sarah Cooper writes. In this blog post, she shares three approaches she has used to ensure she covers current events with her students for five minutes a day. [MiddleWeb](#) (7/1)



## [College Board reverses plans for AP history](#)

The College Board announced Wednesday it would scrap plans to begin the Advanced Placement history exam content around the year 1450, following criticism from educators concerned that the move would make the course too Eurocentric. Instruction now will begin with the year 1200, and a second AP world history course will focus on ancient history.

[Education Week \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (7/19), [Inside Higher Ed](#) (7/19)



## **The 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies Conference**

**October 18—October 20, 2018**  
**Red Lion Hotel Harrisburg East**  
**4751 Lindle Road**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17111**

Conference Theme: PCSS: *Where It All Comes Together*

Social studies are the axis around which all other subjects revolve; math, science, language arts, music, dance and visual arts. The incorporation of knowledge from all of these subjects in our society is what defines our history, our culture and our future. Social studies encourage students to utilize information and skills from a variety of content areas to formulate ideas and opinions, apply processes and express their conclusions, concerns and solutions.

For information, Contact:

[Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies](#)

<https://pcssonline.org/>

## [27 states consider changes to civics lessons](#)

(Pixabay)

Lawmakers in 27 states have considered taking steps to expand civics education programs, and four states are upgrading their lessons using content from the US naturalization test. Charles Quigley, executive director of the nonprofit Center for Civic Education, says civics lessons should begin as early as kindergarten.

[National Public Radio](#) (7/21)



Ambien-popping Klansman,

Rob Rogers banned cartoons

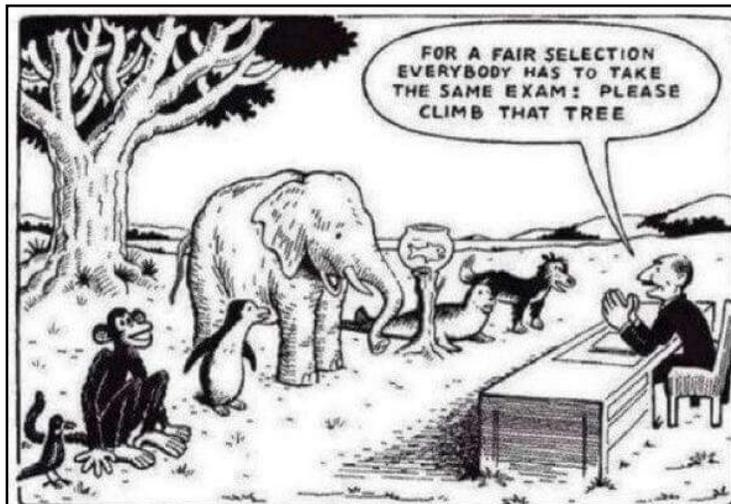


**Resources at Your  
Finger Tips**

- [Awards, Grants, and Contests](#)
- [Professional Learning \(from NCSS\)](#)
- [Professional Learning \(Our Colleagues\)](#)
- [Teaching Resources](#)

Is the anti-testing movement over?

The movement against standardized testing has slowed down, says Monty Neill, executive director of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing. Patricia Levesque, CEO of the Foundation for Excellence in Education, says the debate could be revived, describing such issues as “cyclical.” [Education Week \(tiered subscription model\) \(7/23\)](#)



**Our Education System**

*“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”*

*- Albert Einstein*



*Only by self-respect will you compel others to respect you. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, writer and philosopher*

Teaching About Human Rights

NCSS offers resources to educators and the general public to foster a national conversation on teaching about human rights, including the protection of the rights of all children and the dignity and humanity of every person. (Read More)

\*Read the joint statement from NCSS Executive Director Lawrence Paska and NCSS Past President Terry Cherry affirming NCSS' commitment to children, families, and human rights here.

Ind. teacher with dyslexia inspires students

Chalkbeat/Indiana (7/9)

Erik Catellier doesn't expect perfection from his students. He expects greatness.

That's why Catellier, a language arts teacher at Center for Inquiry School 2, also wants students and their families to know about his own challenges: He is dyslexic.

The actions of men are the best interpreters of their thoughts. -John Locke, philosopher (29 Aug 1632-1704)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
Western Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

School or Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Position and Grade level \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: \$10.00 Amt. enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Check made out to WPCSS

\* NOTE: Most communication will be handled by e-mail. Please include e-mail address in order to be informed of coming events. Also, check with your school tech director to see if the fire wall will allow you to receive The Point, usually about is size 10 mb. Some firewalls reject attachments over 2 mb.

Send application and dues to:

Leo R. West Treasurer • 11533 Clematis Blvd. • Pittsburgh, PA 15235