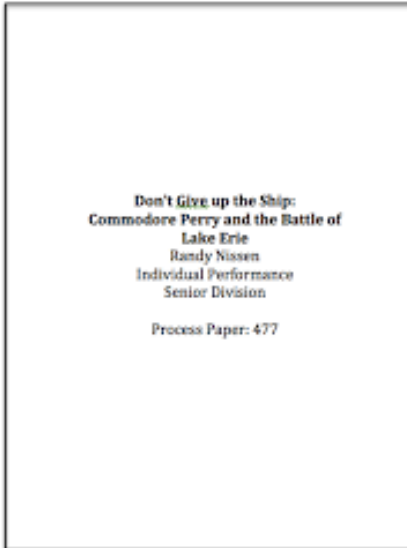


# The POINT!



E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators  
Vol. 13 No. 5  
May 2020



## A BRIGHT SPOT DURING THE PANDEMIC! Local National History Day Winners

[https://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/education/national-history-day?utm\\_content=textlink](https://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/education/national-history-day?utm_content=textlink)

Local entrants in the annual history fair competition at the Heinz History Center were suddenly diverted to take the competition on-line due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The link above provides a list of the winning entries for this year. The topics are timely and illustrate the depth to which students go in researching various topics and composing interesting projects and titles. Please visit the site to see a listing of the variety of projects, topics, and presentations that this year's western Pennsylvanias students put together.

**(NOTE: Illustrations are examples and not Pittsburgh entries.)**



## 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.

S&S, like all places where people congregate, is not open to the public at this time. Please visit on line: [soldiersandsailorshall.org](http://soldiersandsailorshall.org)



## Classrooms Without Borders

Classrooms with Borders in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh and South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh invites you to Join them at the movies on May 14-3pm for **BEN GURION - ÊPILOGUE**.

May 27-3pm **BOX FOR LIFE**. (Time subject to change)

June 11-4pm **SHALOM ITALIA** (Time subject to change)

Rsvp on line to get a link to each film in advance of the scheduled discussion.

<https://classroomswithoutborders.org/events/>



## Ashbrook Academy On-Line

With social distancing policies still in place across the country and traveling across state lines being discouraged, Ashbrook has decided to conduct **our summer academies for high school students online** rather than on campus. While we believe that face-to-face classes are better in many ways, we are excited to be able to offer these programs to your students this summer even while the COVID-19 crisis continues. [LEARN MORE](#)



## Carnegie Museums From Home

Check out the many creative resources you can access anytime, anywhere at all of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. [Discover](#)



## Heinz History Center

To supplement kids' learning at home, we've developed an array of interactive and engaging **DIY History** activities.

Visit the **Learn History Online page** on our **History at Home** portal for step-by-step guides to designing an innovative attraction for the World's Fair, creating art using the *plein air* approach, telling a story using historic images, and more.

Don't forget to tag @HistoryCenter and #HeinzHistoryCenter on social media to show us your history activities in action



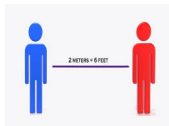
*Many people consider the things government does for them to be social progress but they regard the things government does for others as socialism.*  
-Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court (19 Mar 1891-1974)

# The Point

For  
Western Pennsylvania  
Social Studies Educators  
EDITORS  
Leo R. West  
John Larner

*The Point* is the  
e-newsletter  
of the former WPCSS  
issued monthly via e-mail.  
WPCSS was a non-profit 501c  
organization dedicated to promoting  
the teaching and learning of social  
studies in Western Pennsylvania

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## How the last recession affected the education system

The Great Recession had a lasting effect on the US education system, including budget cuts, layoffs, lower test scores and drops in teacher morale and performance, with many schools in lower-income areas exhibiting greater negative effects than schools in more affluent areas. Education leaders are looking to this data with interest, as another recession seems likely amid the coronavirus pandemic. **Full Story:** [Chalkbeat \(4/22\)](#)

## Unions seek limits to teaching in remote settings

The transition to remote instruction has altered every aspect of public education, including teachers' workdays that may not align with union contracts. Some unions are calling for limits to the number of hours and days that teachers will need to work during the coronavirus pandemic and are pushing back on principals observing remote lessons conducted on video platforms such as Zoom. **Full Story:** [The New York Times \(tiered subscription model\)](#)

## NAEP: US history, geography scores drop

US history and geography scores among eighth-grade students have declined since 2014, while civics scores remained steady, according to results released Thursday by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card. Joel Breakstone, director of the Stanford History Education Group at Stanford University, asserts the history scores show that it is "under-prioritized," compared with other subjects. **Full Story:** [Education Dive \(4/23\)](#), [Education Week \(tiered subscription model\) \(4/23\)](#)

## Teachers urged to work on 3 different R's

It may be more important for students to focus on a set of different R's -- routine, relationships and resilience -- says trauma expert Pamela Cantor. Karen Rose, who teaches social studies at New Rochelle High in New York, is doing this by working to maintain her relationships with current students, emailing a former student and continuing efforts to reach students who have not responded to emails and calls. **Full Story:** [The Hechinger Report \(4/23\)](#)

## CTE teachers innovate to move lessons online

The Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center in Pennsylvania during prolonged school closures acted quickly to establish a virtual learning program that includes interaction with instructors and hands-on learning from their homes. HVAC instructor Ed Campbell developed a lesson in which students audit their homes' HVAC systems -- determine their age and efficiency. **Full Story:** [The Altoona Mirror \(Pa.\) \(4/24\)](#)

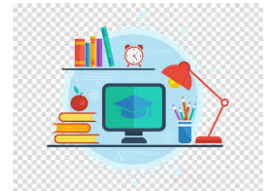
### How school leaders can connect, motivate remotely

There are several ways that school leaders can effectively lead remotely during the current unexpected from-home landscape, writes Jacie Maslyk, assistant superintendent of Hopewell Area School District in Pennsylvania. She recommends nurturing collaboration and relationships, staying connected through multiple technologies, encouraging positivity and recognizing new opportunities as they arise. **Full Story:** [District Administration magazine online \(4/13\)](#)



### More free tools for online learning

Several education organizations and technology providers are offering free tools and resources to support online learning. Design challenges from Tiger Woods's charity, TGR Foundation -- including a basketball shooter -- and a free guide to federal and corporate grants are among the offerings in this week's update. **Full Story:** [SmartBrief/Education \(4/20\)](#)



### Teacher: Tips to help students create history-themed podcasts

In this blog post, several educators share what they have learned during the transition to remote instruction. Among other things, they write that technology is an asset, particularly Zoom's breakout rooms and live collaborative editing tools offered through Google and Office 365 platforms. **Full Story:** [SmartBrief/Education \(4/21\)](#)



### How to engage younger children in online learning

It can be particularly challenging to ensure that younger children are engaged in remote learning. Rhian Evans Alvin, CEO of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, says there are few substitutes for human interaction but that engaging deeper family and community learning is an important component. **Full Story:** [EdSurge \(4/9\)](#)



### Could coronavirus alter education long term?

In this interview, Simon Rodberg, a former charter-school principal, predicts how this period of social distancing could change K-12 schools going forward. Among other things, he says he expects there will be a move to question some of the topics taught in school. **Full Story:** [EdSurge \(4/3\)](#)



### Will summer school help students catch up?

With schools nationwide closed -- some for the remainder of the school year -- officials are considering how to best help students catch up when they return. Some researchers are calling for summer school options, including Douglas Harris of the Brookings Institution, who advocated for federal stimulus funding for access to summer school. **Full Story:** [The Hechinger Report \(4/3\)](#)



*Everything you say should be true, but not everything true should be said. Voltaire, writer, public activist, philosopher*

## Resources and Information

**Civics 101 19th Amendment Podcast, Part 1**

**Civics 101 19th Amendment Podcast, Part 2**

**And Then They Came for Us, 2018 Gavel Award Documentary Winner, Available for Free Streaming for Educators**

**2020 Law Day Promotional Products Are Still Available**

**Chicago Council on Global Affairs Panel on 2020 Election Vulnerabilities**

**Teaching Supreme Court Cases to Middle School Students Using Library of Congress Sources**

**Street Law Materials for APGoPo Required SCOTUS Cases Adapted for At-Home Learning**

**Student Webinar: What Do Clerks at the Supreme Court Do?**

**Submit your civics or law-related education events and initiatives for inclusion in Law Matters.**

**e-Learning Resources to Educate at Home**

The [Civics Renewal Network](#) partners have gathered resources to help teachers and parents while students are home during school closures. These resources span the curriculum from kindergarten to Grade 12 and offer a [variety of activities to keep students engaged](#) in learning outside the classroom.

Check the [website](#) for updates and additional resources.

## Free Book

Please get your **free e-book copy of *The Eyes of Pharaoh***, a mystery set in ancient Egypt, so you can review for possible future use. Download your choice of ePub, mobi (Kindle), or PDF here:

<https://storyoriginapp.com/directdownloads/6e2a2553-4756-4993-b574-83e0766fd52b>

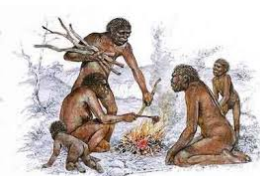
These novels are suitable for ages 9 to 12 and have been successfully used in classrooms, as the quotes in the flyer show. I am also available for **online school visits** to discuss research and writing (\$150 for up to one hour).

## **In Groundbreaking Find, Three Kinds of Early Humans Unearthed Living Together in South Africa**

Scientists studying the roots of humanity's family tree have found several branches entangled in and around a South African cave.

Two million years ago, three different early humans—*Australopithecus*, *Paranthropus*, and the earliest-known *Homo erectus*—appear to have lived at the same time in the same place, near the Drimolen Paleocave System. How much these different species interacted remains unknown. But their contemporaneous existence suggests our ancient relations were quite diverse during a key transitional period of African prehistory that saw the last days of *Australopithecus* and the dawn of *H. erectus*'s nearly two-million-year run.

“We know that the old idea, that when one species occurs another goes extinct and you don't have much overlap, that's just not the case,” says study coauthor [Andy Herries](#), a paleoanthropologist at La Trobe University in Australia.

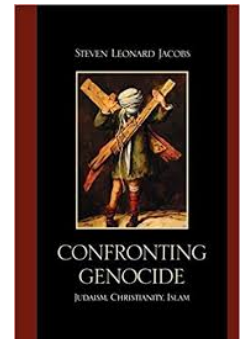


## CHOICES

### Explore Confronting Genocide

The Choices Program curriculum unit *Confronting Genocide: Never Again?* explores these questions. The unit helps students to build analysis skills as they examine the Genocide Convention and consider the challenges of defining "genocide." Other lessons build media literacy skills, help students weigh the benefits and limitations of using personal stories to learn about history, and challenge students to use diverse forms of expression to memorialize a genocide.

The Digital Editions format of *Confronting Genocide* allows teachers to easily select which readings and activities students should complete. It integrates all video content directly into the readings, and provides all study guides and graphic organizers as Word documents or Google Docs



### Remote-learning transition reveals 3 concerns

The rapid shift to remote learning has revealed three key concerns that need to be resolved, writes Torrey Trust, an associate professor of learning technology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. In this commentary, she shares concerns over accessibility, the digital divide as well as privacy and student data. **Full Story:** EdSurge (4/2)



### Experts: Smartphones insufficient for online learning

Smartphones are not adequate substitutes for laptops and wired desktop devices, according to research from Michigan State University's Quello Center for the study of public policy. Students who rely on cell phones for learning fare the same or worse on assessments than those with no connectivity, the research finds. **Full Story:** District Administration magazine online (4/1)



### **1917 Spanish Flu +**

Here is a great free Covid-19 3-day teaching module for social studies teachers. One day is a comparison with the Spanish Flu of 1917, another about the geographic diffusion of the current crisis, and a third day on globalization and economic impact. To access the full unit, go to: <https://www.worldhistoryde.org/COVID-19/> and click on the links.



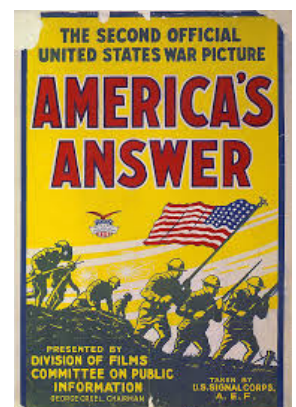
### **World War I Virtual Tours**

The National World War I Museum and Memorial (in Kansas City, MO), has some great virtual tours of their exhibits. See the links below:

"Trenches of World War I" - <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/trenches>

"Tour of the main gallery, led by Col. R. Dudley - <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/immersive-tour-colonel-ret-r-dudley>

"Curator's tour of the main gallery" - <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/curators-tour>



## Fact Sheet on Ramadan

Ramadan 2020 will begin April 23. Here is a short "Fact Sheet on Ramadan" with reference to websites and children's/teen activities that you can use in your teaching. <https://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/Fact%20Sheet%20on%20Ramadan.pdf>



## Deadline extended

FUNDED Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching short term (fall 2021 semester) programs abroad. Columbia, India, Mexico, the Philippines, Uzbekistan, or Vietnam. Application deadline: May 11.

## Study: 5 commonalities in top online instruction

The best online instruction contains five key themes, according to a study in the open-access journal Online Learning. In this blog post, Michael Ralph, a master teacher with the University of Kansas Center for STEM Learning, reveals those teaching strategies include relevant and authentic course material, using various multimedia resources and allowing for students to reflect on what they've learned. **Full Story:** Edutopia (4/17)



## Districts tap public TV for educational content

Public television stations in New Jersey and Washington, D.C., this week began offering an at-home educational program expected to expand nationwide. Some school districts also are developing their own educational programming for local cable TV, viewed as a low-cost way to provide access to academic content for students during prolonged school closures. **Full Story:** Education Week (tiered subscription model) (4/6)



## Districts halt use of Zoom for online lessons

Some school districts that adopted Zoom in their sudden efforts to provide remote instruction -- including Las Vegas, New York City and Washington, D.C. -- have announced they will discontinue their use of the platform. At issue, they say, are concerns about privacy, harassment and security. **Full Story:** National Public Radio (4/6), Chalkbeat/New York (4/6), Tech & Learning online



## Most students aren't being instructed in real time

Pennsylvania school districts have now submitted plans for online learning to the state's Department of Education. All districts in Allegheny County except Pittsburgh Public Schools have posted their plans, and Sarah Schneider reports [most teachers aren't conducting real-time classes](#).



## Some students becoming chronically absent from online classes

The New York Times (tiered subscription model) (4/6)

Chronic absenteeism is a problem in American education during the best of times, but now, with the vast majority of the nation's school buildings closed and lessons being conducted remotely, more students than ever are missing class — not logging on, not checking in or not completing assignments.



*Experience is never limited, and it is never complete.*  
Henry James, writer