

The POINT!

E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators

Vol. 14 No. 11

Novemberr 2021



Valley Forge PCSS Conference

Outside it was cloudy and grey, but inside there was much excitement as the 68th annual conference of PCSS got underway at Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. With the Theme: *Navigating Controversy in Social Studies*, sessions were very pertinent to current problems facing social studies teachers at this time.

This theme attracted *The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (F.I.R.E.)* to become a major sponsor of the conference.

Because of Corona, the conference was limited to one day and fewer sessions than usual. Still under Covid conditions, attendees masked up indoors but enthusiastically participated in activities. Those who were there found the day opening with the Awards Ceremony in the Exhibitors Center, where the closing raffle also took place. Sessions were held in three separate buildings, leading some attendees to stay on one track due to weather.

Tours of the *Medal of Honor Grove* showed how this site established by Dwight Eisenhower, is undergoing some renovations. Originally it was viewed as a memorial park with grassy spaces under the trees. Currently an effort is underway to return the area to a natural state and attract more birds to the area.

Over all, the conference was a success after the long confinement of the past year. The Monday holiday also contributed to success, as school districts were more willing to grant leave.



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 circumstance

JOIN THE SOLDIERS & SAILORS TEAM & HELP US HONOR VETERANS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER & "FILL THE HILL"



From Ruins, Remembrance: POMPEII: THE EXHIBITION Come see our newest exhibit today!

Explore the treasures uncovered from the ruins of Pompeii, the famous Italian city destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A.D. From common cookware to delicate jewelry, the artifacts were preserved in the ashes for more than 2,000 years – and are now available for viewing.

The exhibit offers a look at the ancient port city before and after the eruption, focusing on the life and culture of its citizens — a culture portrayed in its surviving statues, military armor, and pottery. The destruction of Pompeii is also brought to life in the 4D Eruption Theater, which illustrates the timeline of the city’s collapse and allows visitors to experience what the final moments may have been like. Body casts are also on display.

For additional opportunities to learn about the geographical impacts of volcanoes, The Rangos Giant Cinema is also showing **[VOLCANOES: The Fires of Creation](#)**

Congress and Its Relations With the Executive Branch

Dr. Sarah Burns December 8th 2021

About this seminar:



Learn about the evolution of Congressional-Executive relations in this documents-based Seminar, hosted by The Freedoms Foundation. The documents reader will consist of three case studies of documents, each exploring a different era in our history, and how the connection between the two political branches of the federal government have worked in sync and at odds over time.

HOSTED BY: Freedoms Foundation Valley Forge • MacArthur Building

1601 Valley Forge Rd • Phoenixville, PA 19481

REGISTRATION BEGINS: 8:30 AM

SEMINAR: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM Download Information Flyer ([PDF](#))

<p>Executive Branch (President carries out laws)</p> 	<p>Checks on the Legislative Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can propose laws Can veto laws Can call special sessions of Congress Makes appointments Negotiates foreign treaties
<p>Legislative Branch (Congress makes laws)</p> 	<p>Checks on the Executive Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can override President's veto ← Confirms executive appointments X Ratifies treaties X Can declare war X Appropriates money ← Can impeach and remove President ←

The Point

For
Western Pennsylvania
Social Studies Educators

EDITORS

Leo R. West

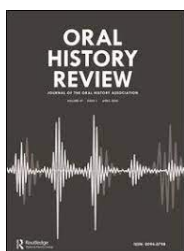
John Larner

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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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Alleged "slap a teacher" trend has schools concerned

Some school districts are concerned about an alleged TikTok trend that encourages students to slap a teacher. Officials at TikTok say they do not have evidence of this challenge, but Connecticut Attorney General William Tong is urging the company to visit with educators and parents in the state and "commit to reforms that stop this reckless content." **Full Story:** The Washington Post (tiered subscription model) (10/6)

Students seek higher pay for Colo.'s rural teachers

Legislation written by three Colorado high-school students, a graduate student and a professor at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs would set a \$40,000 minimum salary for the state's rural teachers. Rural schools across the US often have trouble attracting teachers -- especially if pay tops out at \$34,600 after 10 years, as it does in Campo, Colo., which left high-school senior Malcolm Lovejoy without a math teacher for his sophomore and junior years and without an English teacher this year. **Full Story:** Chalkbeat/Colorado (10/4)

Md. students pay tribute to "shepherd in combat boots"

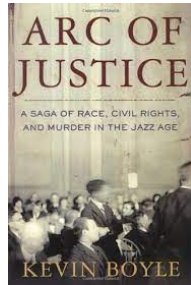
Students and teachers from a Maryland Catholic school recently gathered to honor Father Emil Kapaun, a chaplain during the Korean War who was known as the "shepherd in combat boots." A Medal of Honor recipient, the chaplain recently was buried in a tomb at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Wichita, Kan., after his remains were identified through DNA testing from among those collected from a prisoner of war camp after the 1953 armistice and buried in Hawaii along with other unknown military personnel. **Full Story:** Catholic Standard (Hyattsville, Md.) (9/29)

Students take on 5-year oral history project with peers

A cohort of 12 students in 37 high schools in New York, New Jersey and Florida has been conducting oral history interviews with other students for a five-year project to help their middle-school alma mater, New York City's School in the Square, reach out to fellow alums to learn what students think about issues from school environment to social justice, as well as learn about their lives since middle school. Social studies teacher Maeve Pfeiffer, eighth-grade counselor Arnaldo Rodriquez and two college professors have helped students improve their interview skills with the critical participatory action research method.

One Book" effort in Mich. addresses racism, discrimination

Livonia, Mich., officials and library commission members are introducing the One City, One Book initiative with Kevin Boyle's "Arc of Justice," a historical nonfiction story of a Black family's move into a white Detroit neighborhood. Complementary events designed to get residents talking about prejudice, discrimination and belonging include activities for students, movie screenings, a concert, history talks and a discussion of housing discrimination. Full Story: Hometown Life (Novi, Mich.) (9/15)



Teach history of 6 Black National Park Service rangers

This New York Times Accessible Activities education feature is built around the newspaper's recent article and photo essay about the history of six National Park Service rangers who are Black. The lesson plan offers a warm-up, vocabulary words and prompts for writing and discussion to help students learn about the park rangers, including Shelton Johnson, a ranger at Yosemite National Park in California. Full Story: The New York Times (9/29), The New York Times (9/20)



Hispanic heritage, people, history explored in lessons

Students in a Florida district are learning about civil rights activist Cesar Chavez and other important people of the past and present during Hispanic Heritage Month, which wraps up on Oct. 15. Lessons also include virtual trips to 22 Spanish-speaking countries and explorations of the art and achievements of key figures. Full Story: WUFT-TV/FM/WJUF-FM (Gainesville, Fla.)



Facebook revelations offer opportunities for lessons

Recent news about how Facebook and Facebook-owned Instagram can be harmful to youth is casting a spotlight on how teachers might be able to help students protect themselves on the social media platforms. This article offers eight ideas for teachers -- based on testimony from a Facebook whistleblower and news coverage of the issues -- including lessons about how algorithms work in social media platforms and reminding students that companies like Facebook are in the business of making



One of US' first Black churches unearthed in Va.

Researchers at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia have uncovered the brick foundation of the First Baptist Church -- one of the first churches for Black people in the US -- which likely was built before 1818, destroyed by a tornado in 1834, rebuilt in 1856 and razed for a parking lot in 1956. The discovery also includes other artifacts including a bell and copper clothing pins that will help in efforts by the Williamsburg living museum to tell more stories about the freed and enslaved African Americans who made up more than half of the 18th-century town's population. Full Story: The Associated Press (10/7)Global Youth Justice





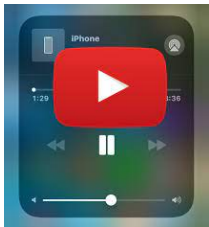
Discovery Education offers free teaching activities

Discovery Education is releasing free teaching resources each month during the 2021-22 school year. The daily activities include instructional supports for specific learning needs for kindergarten through eighth-grade students. **Full Story:** T.H.E. Journal (10/7)



S.C. students get a cartoon cybersecurity lesson

More than 2,000 elementary-school students in Columbia, S.C., are getting an introduction to cybersecurity from Garfield the cartoon cat thanks to a gift from the Center for Cyber Safety and Education. The outreach is part of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. **Full Story:** WIS-TV (Columbia, S.C.) (10/11)



Videos from Choices

Choices has new Videos which can be sampled here

What is Neo Colonialism?

How did U.S. Military affect Caribbean and Latin American

What was U.S. "Dollar Diplomacy" Policy?

Explore All the Videos



Lego to address gender stereotypes of its toys

Officials at Lego say they hope to empower all students by removing gender stereotypes from its products after a study from the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media revealed that 76% of parents surveyed would suggest Legos to their sons but only 24% would encourage their daughters to play with the plastic bricks. Also in the survey, 71% of boys said they worry about being teased for playing with items usually considered as "for girls," while 42% of girls expressed similar concerns about playing with toys marketed for boys. **Full Story:** CNN (10/12), National Public Radio (10/12)

N.J. school teaches about Indigenous people on holiday

The contributions that Indigenous people have made to the US were in the spotlight Monday as pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade students attended their Jersey City, N.J., charter school on what has in the past been the Columbus Day holiday. Most of the lessons focused on the culture and roles of Native Americans in the past and present, such as kindergartners listening to the reading of a picture book about an Ojibwe girl who battles an oil pipeline project and sixth-graders in a Spanish class learning about how Indigenous Peoples Day is marked in some Latin American cultures. **Full Story:** The Jersey Journal (Jersey City, N.J.) (10/11)

You can't erase what you know. You can't forget who you are. Sandra Cisneros, poet, writer, artist

Resources for Native American Heritage Month

Get resources to prepare for Native American Heritage Month from various government entities. Access them here.

Native American Videos, Images, and Other Media

PBS Learning Media hosts a collection of media content for all ages related to Native American Heritage. Use this content to bolster a classroom lesson or discussion.

Teacher's Guide to American Indian History

NEH's EDSITEment! has a guide prepared for educators to learn and teach about Native American Heritage. Download the resources here.

Teaching the Chickasaw Nation

In this episode of Visions of Education, Dan and Michael chat with educator Alexis Walker (Chickasaw) about the Chickasaw Nation and how educators can teach through their people. Listen to the full episode here.



Year's Citizenship Challenge Question:

Should Schools Be Able to Discipline Students for What They Say on Social Media?

The Challenge is a unique opportunity for 4 and 5th grade classes to express themselves by answering a civics essay question regarding a current issue facing our democracy. Classroom teams and individuals are asked to write an essay that addresses their point of view on the assigned issue. Teams take one position and defend their argument in a concise written document of a minimum of 300 words. The contest is drawn from PA Civics standards relating to principles and documents of government; rights and responsibilities of citizens; and information on how government works. From all entries submitted ten finalists will be selected and invited to read their essay on PCN in December or an in person program depending on COVID Protocol. This year's contest is open to schools from across the Commonwealth



Federal funding sought to close "homework gap"

Education groups, including the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, are seeking \$4 billion in the federal budget to help bridge the "homework gap." The measure, which has support from 57 organizations, comes as emergency funding during the coronavirus pandemic that has helped to provide devices and connectivity for students is set to expire in June. **Full Story:** Education Week (10/8)



Don't try to solve serious matters in the middle of the night. Philip K. Dick, writer

!!! ALERT !!!

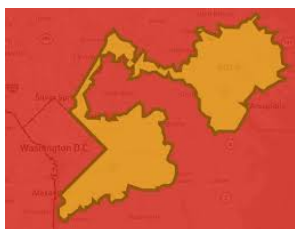
Pa. bill would require all course information online



Pennsylvania lawmakers are considering making it mandatory that schools -- including districts, charter schools, intermediate units and career and technical centers -- post course information online, including curricula, standards, textbooks and syllabi. The bill passed the House last week and was approved by a Senate Education panel this week. **Full Story:** [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette \(tiered subscription model\) \(10/18\)](#)



Report shines light on "educational gerrymandering"



Funding for schools -- often based on taxes -- can have wide variations even among nearby districts, such as in New Jersey where one district spends \$14,000 more per student than a neighboring district, according to a report by Bellwether Education. The report also found that factors including segregation, district boundaries, school-funding formulas and the uneven distribution of affordable housing produce what the authors call "educational gerrymandering." **Full Story:** [Education Week \(10/18\)](#)

1920s novel about race becomes black-and-white film



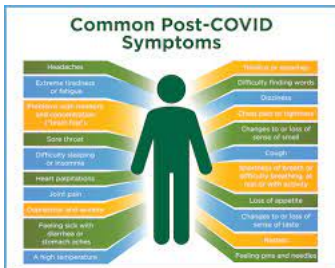
Actor, director and producer Rebecca Hall says she read "Passing" by Nella Larsen more than a decade ago and felt an immediate connection to its themes of racism, colorism and privilege because of experiences within her own family. Hall wrote a screenplay and directed a new movie -- that she insisted on filming in black and white -- version of the novel about two friends and the ambiguity of race. **Full Story:** [The New York Times \(10/20\)](#)

SCOTUS to hear case on censure of school board member



The US Supreme Court will hear a case on Nov. 2 about whether a formal board censure of a board member of the Houston Community College System violated the board member's First Amendment rights. A federal district judge ruled in favor of the system, but a panel of the 5th US Court of Appeals reversed and reinstated the board member's claim last year. **Full Story:** [Education Week \(10/20\)](#)

Post-COVID-19 symptoms affect in-person learning



As students return to in-person learning, there are rare cases of students who have had the coronavirus who are still suffering from post-infection symptoms -- in some cases headaches, fatigue, difficulty concentrating and emotional outbursts. Some doctors say these lingering effects are making it more challenging for some students to adapt to in-person learning. **Full Story:** [The Washington Post \(tiered subscription model\) \(10/3\)](#)

Schools eligible to apply for FCC emergency funds



The second filing window for the Federal Communications Commission's Emergency Connectivity Fund is now open and will close Oct. 13. "This is a second opportunity to help schools and libraries to meet the connectivity needs of students and library patrons for this school year," Jessica Rosenworcel, FCC's acting chairwoman, said. **Full Story:** [MeriTalk \(9/29\)](#)