

The POINT!

E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators
Vol. 14 No. 3
March 2021



Support Social Studies Education

Many people on TV complain that they never learned much about history in school. As a social studies teacher for 38 years, I found my job often hampered by parents, especially males, who exclaimed that they didn't give a damn if their son got a "D" or "F" in social studies, but he better get an "A" in math.

This same attitude was voiced by many leaders who curtailed funding for social studies materials as well as refusing to let teachers attend conferences that provided pertinent professional development programs. Attitudes of adults affect how students view schooling and students often see social studies as unimportant.

Social studies has always been sacrificed when budget restrictions arose and when the 21st century began, preparation for tests often replaced social studies classes, particularly in elementary schools.

This is not meant to excuse the teacher whose lesson consisted of assigning the end of chapter questions in the text book. Text books can provide an outline for a history course but it in no way replaces discussion, debate, and reflection, about ideas, events, and people.

Math and science help prepare students to make a living. Social studies aims to help them learn how to live.

In the light of the recent attack on the National Capitol, it is imperative that more attention **MUST** be given to the teaching and learning about history and government.

Leo West



Don't be afraid to take time to learn. Vera Wang, fashion designer

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.



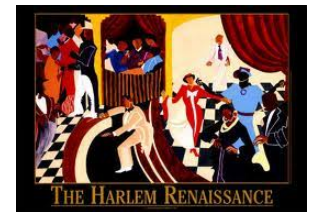
Holocaust Education Symposium for Teachers

Free! Build your own schedule! (Make sure to sign up for the CWB workshop! March 7-9, 2021 Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)

Artists of the Harlem Renaissance: Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Jacob Lawrence with guest educator Laura Libby

From Frederick Douglass to Ta-Nehisi Coates: A workshop series exploring race using texts as a window into history with Susan Stein
This program is geared for educators, but open to all learners.

Wednesday, March 3, 2021 4 PM Eastern Time
Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)



Jewish Heritage Around the World Part II with CWB scholar Avi Ben Hur and guest speakers *The Jews of Turkey Part II*

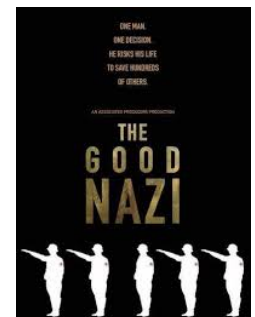
Tuesday, March 2, 2021 2 PM Eastern Time
Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)



Film and Post Screening Discussion "The Good Nazi" à

Post-Film Discussion with Film Director Yaron Niski, and 2G Survivor and Author Dr. Michael Good Sunday, March 4, 2021 3 PM Eastern Time

Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)
RSVP to receive a link to the film prior to the discussion.



The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependent upon it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do.

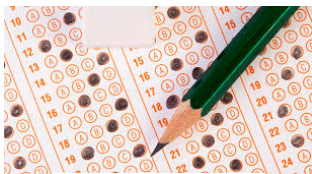
-Galileo Galilei, physicist and astronomer (15 Feb 1564-1642)

The Point

For
Western Pennsylvania
Social Studies Educators
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The Point is the
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organization dedicated to promoting
the teaching and learning of social
studies in Western Pennsylvania

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www.chalkbeat.com



How the first female private detective protected Lincoln

Kate Warne, considered the first female private detective in US history, worked for Pinkerton's National Detective Agency and escorted President-elect Abraham Lincoln, in disguise, on a train ride to his 1861 inauguration. Warne's work included going undercover, discovering a plot to kill Lincoln as well as recovering money stolen in a robbery, leading her boss to hire more women, with Warne put in charge of them. **Full Story:** The Washington Post (tiered subscription model) (2/15)

Lawmakers in 5 states object to schools using 1619 Project

K-12 Dive (2/12)

Right-leaning lawmakers in at least five states — Iowa, South Dakota, Missouri, Arkansas and Mississippi — have introduced legislation that would prohibit schools from teaching The 1619 Project or cut funding from those that do. The ongoing long-form journalism project was published by The New York Times in 2019 and explores the impact of slavery and contributions of Black Americans to the formation and growth of the United States.

White House: Testing to go forward this year

President Joe Biden's administration will require students to take standardized tests this year, but the results will be used only to gauge students' needs. Given safety concerns related to the pandemic, Ian Rosenblum, acting assistant education secretary, says closed schools should not be reopened for the purpose of testing students. **Full Story:** Chalkbeat (2/22), USA Today (2/23)

Experts urge caution on standardized testing data

Testing experts predict many students will opt out of standardized tests this year and caution officials to consider that when analyzing results. At issue, officials say, is that students from low-income families and students of color, who are more likely to be learning online, may be more likely to not participate in the exams. **Full Story:** Chalkbeat (2/24)

National park status sought for Colo. internment camp

A trip to learn about family history started John Tonai on a 10-year mission to get the Amache internment camp in Colorado, where his father was interned as a teenager, added to the National Park System. Officials say that while the site is already designated a National Historic Landmark, there are additional hurdles for it to pass for consideration as a National Park. **Full Story:** The Colorado Sun (Denver) (2/5)

Learning about Jan. 6 riot opens door to more history

Recognizing that the Jan. 6 insurrection in Washington, D.C., has roots in Jim Crow, reconstruction after the Civil War and the antebellum South can help teachers offer broader history lessons, writes Rann Miller, creator of the "Urban Education Mixtape" blog and director of the after-school 21st Century Community Learning Center in New Jersey. In this commentary, Miller offers suggestions for teachers, including to use diverse voices in lessons and help students engage in the community. **Full Story:** Edutopia (2/18)



"Survival" class helps students prepare for real world

Home economics has morphed into "Senior Survival" at Graham-Kapowsin High School in Washington, where math teacher Taylor Edwards offers a class to give students experience with important skills they'll need as grown-ups, including budgeting and stress management, especially related to social media usage. In this podcast, Edwards explains how guests from the community also help students hone their job-search skills through mock interviews. **Full Story:** MyNorthwest (Seattle) (2/23), MyNorthwest (Seattle)/KIRO-FM (Seattle) podcast (2/22)



50 photos tell story of US military history

A collection of historical photos offer insight into the history of the US military. The 50 photographs assembled include one snapshot of a child greeting a soldier in World War I and one image of three women assembling the fuselage of a bomber. **Full Story:** Stacker (12/4)



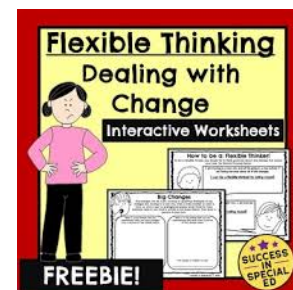
Being Accepted, Not Just Tolerated, Is Good for Mental Health

To truly thrive, LGBTQ educators need to feel a sense of belonging. Education Week blogger Peter DeWitt shares how, as a gay teacher and principal, he struggled to be himself. But that changed with the help of a supportive network of colleagues. This article, part of Educational Leadership's special issue on "Mental Health for Educators," is free and open to all users through June



How special education could revolutionize learning

Individualized learning, a fundamental part of special education, is gaining interest from the wider educational community with more than 40 states reportedly considering some form of the approach. While barriers to widespread adoption exist, including staffing gaps and extra educator training, proponents note that shifting focus from the curriculum to the student creates a more effective and efficient educational experience. **Full Story:** The Hechinger Report (1/26)



*The trees that are slow to grow bear the best fruit.
Moliere, playwright, actor and poet*

Addressing Current Events

How educators handle tomorrow's historical events

Major historical events, such as the US Capitol insurrection, have increased student interest in political science, says Jeremy Outsen, an eighth-grade social studies teacher in Illinois. Outsen and other teachers say they are encouraging students to analyze facts and evidence, and reminding them that people can disagree without being enemies. **Full Story:** Daily Journal (Kankakee, Ill.) (tiered subscription model) (1/23)

Teachers to share US Constitution lessons with peers

More than 100 teachers from 34 states are part of the National Constitution Center's first Teacher Advisory Council cohort, where they share ideas and experiences related to lessons about constitutional issues, says Kerry Sautner, the Philadelphia center's chief learning officer. Teachers can tap virtual experts to answer students' questions during class, while teachers of other subjects, such as math can ask about and share how to include civics in STEM classes, Sautner explains. **Full Story:** KYW-AM (Philadelphia) (1/22)

Application trends seen in latest Common App data

Fewer lower-income and first-generation college students are applying for college than in previous years, sounding off "alarm bells" for colleges, says Common App President and CEO Jenny Rickard. The information is based on January data related to the 900 schools that use the Common App, which also shows that smaller, less competitive colleges are seeing fewer applicants, while larger, more competitive institutions are receiving more. **Full Story:** Inside Higher Ed (1/26)

'Smalltime' author explores Johnstown's mob as family history

Author Russell Shorto looked through FBI reports, historic archives, and family stories for his new book on his family's tie to the small-town mob in Johnstown. Bill O'Driscoll spoke with Shorto about the little-discussed history of the crime syndicate, which like their big-city counterparts sprang up during Prohibition and continued flourishing into the 1960s.

Student's tool measures social justice credibility of books

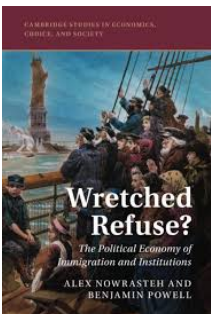
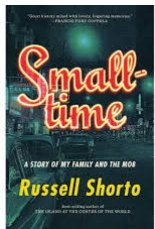
Reading a poor attempt to address Islam in a book series has prompted New Hampshire high-school junior Aulia Castellano, who is Muslim, to create a social justice literacy matrix for an independent study project. Castellano's says her tool is for readers to reflect on the quality and credibility of books that touch on race, religion, ethnicity and culture by evaluating their use of "loaded words," perspective, normalization and tokenism. **Full Story:** Portsmouth Herald (N.H.) (1/30)

Three Books on Immigration

Them and Us. By Phillippe Legrain. Oneworld 320 Pages

Wretched Refuse. By Alex Nowrasteh & Benjamin Powell. Cambridge University Press 240 Pages.

Patriotic Pluralism. Jeffrey Miral. Harvard University Press. 232 pages



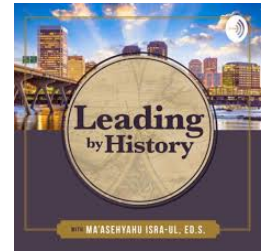
Gorman inauguration poem shared with kindergartners

Hannah Thrower, a kindergarten teacher in Nevada, is introducing poetry to her young students. The kindergartners watched a video of Amanda Gorman as she recited her poem "The Hill We Climb" during the inauguration of President Joe Biden, and Thrower asked students to identify powerful words they heard and decipher what they mean. **Full Story:** Reno Gazette-Journal (Nev.) (tiered subscription model) (2/5)



Educator focuses efforts on "REAL" history lessons

Keeping history lessons "REAL" -- relevant, engaging, active and living -- are keys to the work of Richmond Public Schools instructional specialist Ma'asehyahu Isra-UI's guidance for teachers. Isra-UI shares that, for example, the Virginia district's students have had opportunities during remote learning to pose questions of the state's lieutenant governor, a congressman and local elected officials via Zoom. **Full Story:** Richmond Free Press (Va.) (2/4)



Mich. men share history, memories of Buffalo Soldiers

A red barn in Detroit is filled with horses and history lessons about the Buffalo Soldiers, segregated cavalry units known for their bravery, says James Mills, who helped form the Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Association and its barn. Mills says he helped start the group 15 years ago to promote the history and contributions made -- and largely forgotten or omitted -- by the all-Black regiments. **Full Story:** WDIV-TV (Detroit) (2/5)



Impeachment offers lessons for range of students

The ongoing impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump brings with it lessons about government, free speech and other topics, say Minnesota high-school social studies teachers Kathryn Gardner and Niki Debuhr, who say Trump's historic second impeachment offers important civics lessons to students who are now or will become voters in the future. Some university professors in Texas are using the trial as part of classes on the presidency and international politics, while a law class is studying the impeachment with an eye on the US Constitution. **Full Story:** KAAL-TV (Austin, Minn.) (2/9), KTRK-TV (Houston) (2/9)



Teacher works to fill knowledge gap with world religions course

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, Ill.) (2/6)

Growing up in a condominium complex in Des Plaines and later in a duplex in Arlington Heights, John Camardella's family dinner table was always crowded -- and diverse.

It often included their neighbors -- a Korean Buddhist family and a Jewish widow -- and Mundelein seminarians who grew up in Poland, the Philippines and Uganda.



*Start with what is right rather than what is acceptable. Franz Kafka,
writer*

USEFUL CONNECTIONS

The **University of Pittsburgh Library System** has a page with links to several websites that host virtual collections of primary sources related to East Asian history and culture. The page is at <https://pitt.libguides.com/c.php?g=870522&p=6280616>. They also have other guides to primary and secondary sources, but most of them are for collections that require access through university credentials.

The Center for Latin American Studies at Ohio State University has some great resources for K-12 teachers. One is "Teach the Andes Repository" - <https://clas.osu.edu/andean-amazonian-studies>. Another, covering a variety of world areas, is "Global Teacher."

The **University of Michigan** hosts **free** resources for teaching Islamic art history on their site Khamseen. They have several short videos covering a variety of art forms and regions. You can view these resources at <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/khamseen/>.

On April 3 from 10am – 2pm Eastern **Georgetown University and Howard University** are hosting their annual Educator Workshop on Award-Winning Children and Youth Literature. The workshop will look at the topic of identity through books from the Africana book awards and the Middle East Outreach Council book awards. Registration for the **online** workshop is available at <https://ccas.georgetown.edu/2020/01/15/asserting-identity-in-children-and-youth-literature-a-workshop-for-educators/>.

The **Smithsonian National Museum of African Art** (Washington DC) has some online resources for educators and exhibits that you can use in your classroom. Check them out at <https://africa.si.edu/education/>

The **Peace Corps World Wise Schools program** has some great educators' resources, including lesson plans and accounts of life in different areas of the world. Check them out at <https://www.peacecorps.gov/educators/resources/>

TheMoise A.Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies at NC State University has an online exhibit on Arab American history and culture called Turath at <https://www.turath2020.org/>.

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University has a collection of online resources for K-12 educators teaching about the Middle East. Topics include religion, pop culture, government, and more! The resources can be found at <https://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/k-12-resources>.

