

Editor's Notebook

History Face to Face

Syd Golston

I have discovered over the years that many social studies teachers shared childhood experiences that influenced our career choice. Some examples: we liked to read biographies in grade school, we had stamp collections, and our parents took us to museums and historic sites. I was a lucky New York City kid, with the huge armored horses at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Victorian dollhouses of the Museum of the City of New York, and trips to Washington, Philadelphia, and Williamsburg.

Touring an old house, touching a sampler embroidered by a little girl who was born 300 years before, talking with a soldier who landed at Normandy—these are experiences that can't be matched in any textbook, and they are opportunities we can give to our students anywhere in the country, as you see in our selections for this special issue of *Social Education*. Paul LaRue brought his class to a field in Ohio where they helped archaeologists to explore a post Civil War freedmen's community, and one girl discovered her own family's heritage there. Thousands of fourth graders visit Stillwater, Oklahoma, every year to re-enact a day as a student in the Pleasant Valley one-room schoolhouse, built in 1899 (David L. Buckner, Pamela U. Brown, and John Curry). Barbara Hatch's students in Arizona

interview and publish veterans' remembrances and travel to Europe with her to be *really* face to face with the sites they have heard about, and Arizona Historical Society education director Kyle McKoy reminds us that if our students can't go far afield at all, we can borrow artifact kits and bring students face to face with museum objects in our own classrooms. Drawing on the experience of Colonial Williamsburg, William E. White shows how teachers can get the most out of a field trip.

A jewel in the crown of this authentic learning is National History Day, in which so many NCSS teachers participate. We have two articles here about NHD, one by Ann Claunch, and the other by Norman Conard telling the story of the rural Kansas teenagers who researched Holocaust rescuer Irena Sendler, who was little known then; their NHD performance, *Life in a Jar*, evolved into a Hallmark Hall of Fame production last year.

My own small contribution is about using the WPA Guidebooks with your classes. These have become one of my passions for the last 20 years, and if you find your own state's guidebook, it can bring you and your students face to face with centuries of social history in your own backyard. I am predicting that lots of you will become hooked on these, and you'll compete for the old editions on eBay.

This issue has been a joy to put together. Please write to me at sgolston@ncss.org and tell me about your own local history projects.

Michael Simpson

In her words above, Syd Golston, the guest editor of this issue's special section on "History Face to Face," has highlighted the importance of class activities that engage students directly and capture their imaginations. Outside her special section, many contributions to this issue also take a creative approach. C. Fred Risinger's Internet column presents sites that help educators make the most of their local history projects. And nobody could think that economics is a "dismal science" after reading the article presenting the views of Adam Smith and John Maynard Keynes in the form of their ghosts appearing to Ben Bernanke in his sleep, as related by M. Scott Niederjohn, Mark C. Schug and William C. Wood.

Our regular readers will be fascinated by the account by Lee Ann Potter, editor of our Teaching with Documents department, of her school visits in Norway, where she is spending a year as a visiting Fulbright scholar. Later on, her colleagues at the National Archives, Stephanie Greenhut and Megan Jones, present a Teaching with Documents feature about a student activity that uses cell phones to learn about the Constitution.

Kim Crews shows how census information can be used to develop students' abilities to gather and evaluate data, and presents an intriguing snapshot of changes in this country during the past 100 years. Our members will also find additional features on our decennial census on our website at www.socialstudies.org.

In the Looking at the Law column, Tiffany Willey Middleton dis-

cusses one of the most important current international problems—the regulation of nuclear weapons—with three international experts, and adds a timeline and discussion questions that help to bring this issue into the classroom.

We conclude the issue with a special section on the use of instructional technology in the classroom, prepared by our technology editors, Michael J. Berson and Meghan McGlenn Manfra. In the first article, Bruce Fehn, Melanie Johnson and Tyson Smith present the opportunities for students to create documentary productions on computers. Brad M. Maguth, Misato Yamaguchi and Jeff Elliott describe an activity in which students address major global issues by using technologies including Skype and iMovie, and posting class videos on YouTube, Facebook and MySpace. Ilene R. Berson and Michael J. Berson present sites that have won the prestigious Webby's award and offer particular value for the social studies classroom. Meghan McGlenn Manfra, George E. Gray, Jr., and John K. Lee explore the possibilities of classroom blogs, and offer suggestions to maximize their effectiveness.

This issue of *Social Education* combines the March and April issues of the journal, which have previously been published separately. The present issue contains almost the same number of articles (18) as both the March and April issues combined offered last year.

We hope that our readers will enjoy the contents of this issue. As always, we welcome the comments of readers on any of the contributions at socialed@ncss.org. 