

Editor's Notebook

This issue of *Social Education* presents an exciting line-up of articles that showcase the importance of social studies education for building thinking skills and developing the abilities of students to discuss controversial issues.

In our Sources and Strategies column, Lee Ann Potter examines the acquisition by the Library of Congress of Thomas Jefferson's personal library in 1815 to rebuild its book collection after British troops set fire to the public buildings of Washington, DC, during the War of 1812. Her teaching suggestions encourage students to evaluate the global context of that war. She invites our readers to join a Library of Congress blog on the subject in the last week of October.

In the Lessons on the Law column, Catherine E. Hawke examines the legal cases on which the Supreme Court made decisions in its last term, when it "issued blockbuster rulings in such diverse legal areas as same-sex marriage, the Affordable Care Act, housing discrimination, and the death penalty." (229) In a preview of the Court's pending cases in the coming year, Mark A. Cohen predicts "another action-packed term." (232)

The College Board published a new framework for teaching Advanced Placement U.S. History this summer that included revisions to an original draft that had been criticized by conservatives for ignoring American Exceptionalism and highlighting negative elements in U.S. history. Fritz Fischer reviews the protests by students in Colorado against the conservative attempts to change the teaching of U.S. history, and warns about the problems posed by ideological challenges to the scholarship of professional historians.

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Jane Bolgatz and Ryan Crowley point out that the Johnson administration had several motives for advancing this legislation, one of which was to improve the international image of the U.S. during the Cold War. Their teaching suggestions focus on primary documents that will expand students' knowledge of the international context of Johnson's civil rights policy.

One hundred years ago this past summer, U.S. Marines invaded Haiti, and did not leave the country for 19 years. Jennifer Bauduy reviews the invasion and occupation in the context of the U.S. interventionist policies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that promoted U.S. business interests in the Americas. The featured document is the 1915 Treaty between the United States and Haiti, which is annotated to highlight important points and questions for class discussion.

A legal initiative that can capture students' imagination is the Innocence Project, which has used DNA evidence to exonerate more than 300 wrongfully convicted people. Seán Arthurs presents a lesson plan that introduces students to the Project and reviews one of its cases in the form of a real-life mystery

that can help students understand mistakes in the criminal justice system and ways of correcting them.

"Google it!" is a common expression, but there is a risk that students will treat the results of a Google search as the end result of an inquiry instead of realizing that they need to use their powers of reasoning to analyze the information obtained by the search. Ashley N. Woodson shows what works and what doesn't when students use Google for historical research.

Brian C. Gibbs shares a successful strategy for engaging students in controversial issues by having the class discuss a viewpoint and "vote with their feet" either in favor, in opposition, or in between. He describes how two classes—one an honors class, the other a "problematic" one—discussed the ban on the wearing of headscarves by Muslim students in public schools in Paris, and notes how well the latter class performed.

Students are fascinated by places that were the scene of major historical events, such as Civil War battlefields. James A. Percoco presents ideas on how to engage students in field trips that result in significant learning. He describes the curricular initiatives of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, which involves students in a variety of creative projects.

Our Research and Practice column was launched in January 2001, with Walter C. Parker as its founding editor. After 14 years, Walter has decided to pass the responsibilities of the column to another scholar. We all thank Walter for his inspired accomplishments as editor of this highly regarded column. As his successor, we welcome Patricia G. Avery, whose many accomplishments include a distinguished term as Editor of *Theory and Research in Social Education*, the journal of the NCSS College and University Faculty Assembly. In this issue's Research and Practice column, Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg and Peter Levine report some fascinating research showing that students who have attended "racially pluralistic schools," in which there are more than two racial groups, but no dominant group, are less civically active after graduating than other students. One reason for this is probably that students in these schools are hesitant to take stands that might offend other students. The authors show, however, that teaching about controversial issues in such schools offers enormous benefits that enable students "to work across differences" (273) and make them more determined to engage in civic action.

C. Frederick Risinger's Internet column emphasizes the need for more teaching about international issues and foreign policy at a time when schools are focusing instead on the Common Core and other standards. He recommends some outstanding and easily accessible online resources.

As always, the editors of *Social Education* welcome the comments of readers on any of the contributions to this issue at socialed@ncss.org.