



horizons

œ a quarterly publication for MCSS members œ

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MCSS Annual Conference 2007

Creating Effective Citizens in Missouri: One People, Many Voices

Mark your calendar for the 2007 MCSS Annual Conference to be held February 23-24, 2007 at the St. Charles Convention Center in historic St. Charles!

The conference theme, "Creating Effective Citizens in Missouri: One People, Many Voices," will focus on the diverse populations of people that have contributed to the state's heritage. Conference highlights will include workshops promoting best practices in social studies at all levels, vendor displays, and teacher networking opportunities.

The conference committee is now accepting proposals for presentations and workshops.

Please see the insert for the Presentation Proposal Form. Accepted presentations will receive 20% off of conference registration! All proposals must be submitted to Ted Green no later than November 1, 2006. Conference registration information is inserted in this issue of Horizons!



The new state-of-the-art 154,000 square feet St. Charles Convention Center will play host the 2007 MCSS Annual Convention.

MCSS is an organization that strives to improve social studies education throughout the state.

MCSS believes that the study of civics, history, economics, and geography as well as other social studies disciplines will prepare our students to be responsible citizens in a democratic society.

This is our *commitment to the future.*

Real Heros...

Dr. Dennis Denenberg
American Educator, Spring 2001

William Penn was an obsession for Elaine Peden, the Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine reported in 1991. Peden had devoted enormous time and energy to promoting recognition of Pennsylvania's founder. In 1984, she had persuaded Congress to extend honorary United States citizenship to both Penn and his wife, Hannah. But Peden's successes in bringing Penn into the consciousness of Americans had been soured for her by disappointments. When she visited the restored William Penn statue on top of Philadelphia's City Hall, she

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Free Citizenship Materials Available to MCSS Teachers

The American Promise brings the American democratic system to life, letting students experience firsthand what it's like to govern and make the decisions that bind us together as a country.

Since its premiere on KOED and PBS, the series has been used in more than 50,000 classrooms nationwide to provide lessons in government, civics and history, with ideas that intrigue and inspire students.

National Council for the Social Studies is proud to partner with Farmers Insurance to bring The American Promise education outreach program to educators across the nation.

The American Promise is a terrific way to spark discussion and thinking about democracy, government and U.S. history in your classroom. Check out <http://www.farmers.com/FarmComm/AmericanPromise/> for ordering information and resources.



JUST KIDDING®



Continuity and Change: Building a National Identity

Missouri Council for History Education to hold State Conference

Continuity and change are vital themes in the study of history. At the State Conference of the Missouri Council for History Education you can explore how the forces of the past and the realities of the present impact who we are as a people.

Explore with our keynote speaker how factors in the nation's past and features of our communal space have shaped our national identity. Dr Elliott West is a specialist in environmental history and how myth and reality of the American West impacts our national identity.

Participants will have access to resources and scholarship to support and enliven their teaching of history. Workshops and discussions will focus on ways to teach the evolving nature of national character in the twenty-first century classroom.

The Conference, presented by the Missouri Historical Society and the Cooperating School Districts in St. Louis, will be held September 29-30 2006 in St. Louis. To obtain a registration form, contact Megan Moncure at 314.692.9702, mmoncure@csd.org, or visit www.csd.org/csdrpdc/iec/registration. Seating is limited so register early and save on this tremendous professional development opportunity.

The Event will be hosted by the Missouri Historical Society in Forest Park, St. Louis.

The President's Corner

Glenn Mechem, MCSS President

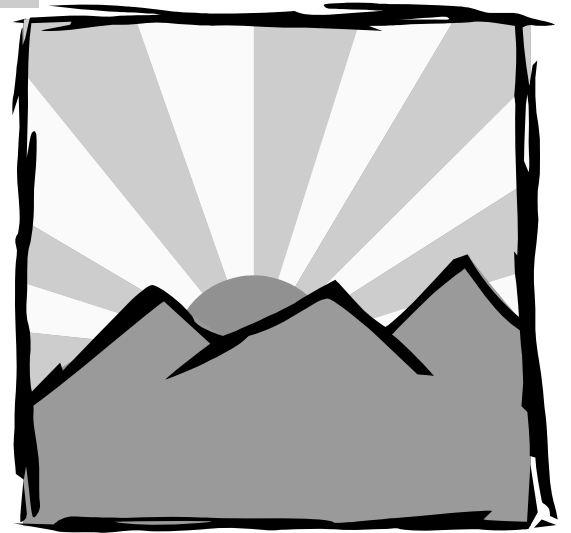
As I sit and ponder about what to write about I am looking at a beautiful sunrise. It is a sunrise with all the different colors that only a sunrise can produce. As a new year, begins it reminded me of what we all do for a profession. A sunrise is a start to a new day—one of which you can hope will remain full of sunrays—warming the earth and causing a contented feeling for the entire day. Our school year with our students can be the same. Our smile as they come into the classroom is their sunray. A kind word or pat on the back can be the contented feeling. The color variety of the sunrise, or sunset, represents the variety of students we teach as well as the material we try to get them to learn. It has become part of our job to accept the challenge of being the sunshine in our students' lives.

As a member of a professional association, I am sure you are always looking for opportunities to improve your abilities and knowledge. Do not forget about our website—which can be found at www.mosocialstudies.org. This site is being worked on and updated all the time. There are links to social studies sites that will provide you with a wealth of information and a few lesson plans as well. We would accept additional lesson plans to be placed on the site if you have one you would like to share. You will find our updated constitution there as well.

By this time I am sure you have received your "Save the Date" card about our spring conference. If for some reason you haven't, please visit the web site as you can find information there. The conference will take place in historic St. Charles—home of the first state capital. There are going to be wonderful sessions to attend as well as a fantastic opportunity to network with teachers from across the state. So I personally invite you to attend this conference, renew old friendships or start new ones.

As I finish my words to you the sun has risen in the sky—giving a fullness and completeness to the day. You know it's just like a fully satisfied day at school when all had gone well, or you may have reached that unreachable student. WOW, what a feeling!!!! Make it a great, full sunny day. Until next time,

Glenn



Wait an Instructional Minute...

Learner-Centered Classrooms

Is your classroom "learner-centered?" What does that look like? According to Policy Study Associates, students need to feel that "school work is significant, valuable, and worthy of their efforts" (1995). Students are more engaged in activities when they can build on prior knowledge and draw clear connections between what they are learning and the world they live in. Strong, Silver, and Robinson (1995) suggest the mystery approach in which "students are presented with fragmented or contradictory information about a subject and then asked to examine available evidence to develop their own hypothesis...giving students an opportunity for direct inquiry and discovery for themselves."

Inquiry-based Learning

Inquiry-based learning seems to be a buzzword that continually emerges from recent educational literature. "Asking questions is at the heart of inquiry-based learning. The goal is not to ask just any questions, of course, but ones that kids honestly care about. The teacher's role is to guide the kids in finding the answers themselves and encourage them to ask new questions along the way." Check out the following website about inquiry:
<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/inquiry/index.html>.

Real Heros...

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expected to see again in the waiting area the 75 paintings of events in the life of the Penns done by high school students. Instead she found a blowup of the Phillie Phanatic, the cartoonish mascot of the city's professional baseball team. The city's founder was out; the city's newest fantasy figure was in.

The situation is not much better at our country's official museum. A few years ago, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History published a new brochure to guide kids through the museum. It is written around the Charles Schulz "Peanuts" characters, with their pictures everywhere. So, today we have Snoopy leading our kids around our national history museum instead of Sacagawea who led Lewis and Clark across our nation!

Two years ago, the U.S. Mint began issuing special quarters (five a year for 10 years) to honor all of our 50 states. Guess who the Mint is using in its advertising campaign to call attention to this worthwhile endeavor? Perhaps one of the heroes pictured on some of the quarters, such as Delaware's Caesar Rodney who, despite suffering from asthma and cancer, rode 80 miles on horseback to Philadelphia, arriving at Independence Hall just in time to cast the deciding vote in favor of our nation's independence. Or perhaps the famous Minutemen -- a statue of one graces the Massachusetts quarter -- those always-at-the-ready farmers and colonists who rallied together to help defeat the British during the Revolutionary War -- Or perhaps those who risked their lives to settle the West, build the railroads, or design our great bridges. No, none of these. The U.S. Mint chose instead, as the icon for its honor-the-states educational initiative -- are you ready -- Kermit the Frog, decked out as what appears to be (although no one seems to know for sure) George Washington -- or one of those guys in the funny colonial hats and cape.

Classrooms and homes around the United States duplicate this pattern. Pictures of great people have given way to fantasy creatures. At one time many -- if not most -- public school classrooms in America displayed portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Today, if such portraits appear at all, it is usually for a two-week period in February, during Presidents' Day commemorations.

I have visited hundreds of classrooms over the past 20 years. I have talked with teachers, observed displays, and examined curriculum materials; and I have become aware of how fantasy figures compete with real-life heroes for students' attention. Often, the fantasy ones are winning.

Cartoon and other fantasy characters pervade children's

lives. Little Mermaids and Elmo adorn the clothing kids wear and the lunch pails they carry. A little girl gets up in the morning. Her head probably rested on a Powerpuff Girls pillowcase. She goes down to breakfast and eats cereal from a box with a cartoon character on it, then gets dressed in a T-shirt with Rugrats on it, picks up her Pokemon lunch pail, and heads off to school where there is a bulletin board with more cartoon figures on it.

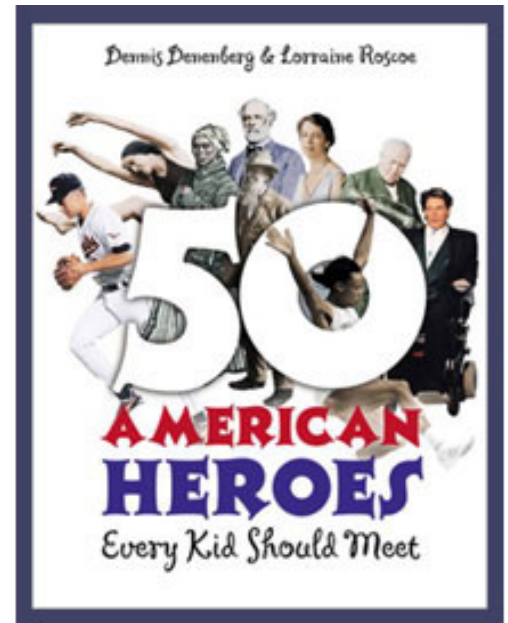
Teachers and parents choose such materials so frequently, they tell me, because they believe these figures have motivational value. Cartoon mice and ducks are familiar. "They can be comforting to kids," parents and teachers say.

Perhaps fantasy characters motivate and comfort. But junk food motivates and comforts, too. Like junk food, popular fantasy and cartoon characters are sweet, enticing to the eye -- and empty of real value. Like junk food, they displace what is more important. They fill kids up.

The kids no longer hunger for the nourishment they need to become healthy, fully mature adults.

Is it any wonder that teenagers become hooked on the next level of fad fantasy figures -- the super-rich athletes and popular culture rock and entertainment stars. Their presence in the media is everywhere, with entire cable channels devoted to the icons of music and athletics. So the Rugrats T-shirts eventually become Aerosmith shirts, Powerpuff Girls backpacks become WWF (World Wrestling Federation) duffel bags, and the very innocent Little Mermaid poster in a child's bedroom is replaced by a nearly life-sized one of Britney Spears.

The over-presence of fantasy characters in our culture and in our schools and homes contributes, I am convinced, to a confusion for our children and adolescents about the value of real-life human accomplishments. It is not surprising that in 1991, when a Harrisburg, Pa.-area school district asked its fifth- to 12th-graders to name people they most admired, the teenagers chose rock stars, athletes, and television personalities -- people who often seem to be larger than life. Other than Nelson Mandela, no famous people from any other field of endeavor were mentioned. No great



artists, inventors, humanitarians, political leaders, composers, scientists, doctors none were mentioned by the 1,150 students.

Likewise, when the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain asked a representative sample of 25- to 45-year-olds to write a two-page essay about their favorite hero, there were a lot of blank pages; 60 percent of the group said they have no personal heroes.

I frequently am asked to give presentations on why heroes are important for children. I sometimes begin by putting on the familiar Mickey Mouse ears, and I lead my adult audience in a rousing rendition of the "Mickey Mouse Club" song. Almost everyone knows the words. Then I switch to a colonial hat and recite a portion of Thomas Jefferson's immortal words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." I ask the audience to join me as soon as they know the words of our birth certificate, the Declaration of Independence. While most adults can, I ask them, "How many of our young people could repeat those words?" The comparison with the Mickey Mouse song leads to a spirited discussion of what has happened to real heroes in our culture.

"Look around," I say to my audiences. "You're surrounded by people. Count 30 people, yourself among them. One of that 30 would probably have polio if it weren't for Jonas Salk. That's how prevalent polio was. But when Salk died a few years ago, we as a nation hardly took notice. Certainly, few young people have any sense of how that great doctor saved their generation from a crippling disease."

Have we lost a generation of people who don't have heroes, who don't know what a hero is or don't understand what a positive influence a hero can be in a person's life?

A hero is an individual who can serve as an example. He or she has the ability to persevere, to overcome the hurdles that impede others' lives. While this intangible quality of greatness appears almost magical, it is indeed most human. And it is precisely because of that humanness that some individuals attain heroic stature. They are of us, but are clearly different.

We look to heroes for inspiration. Through their achievements, we see humankind more positively. They make us feel good. They make us feel proud. Their successes and failures lead us to ponder our own actions and inactions. By learning about their lives, our lives become enriched.

We have to stop hiding real heroes from students. In our classrooms and homes, we must help the next generation discover the excitement of meeting great men and women.

There are literally hundreds of exciting ways to bring real

heroes to life. First and foremost, read about them. So many quality biographies are now available by superb children's authors (Hakim, Freedman, Meltzer, Fritz, Adler, and others) -- yet teachers and parents rarely choose a biography when they read aloud to their kids. Make it part of your adult responsibility to transmit heroes to the next generation.

Once kids have met these extraordinary heroes, engage them in meaningful projects to make the hero a real presence in your classroom and home. Celebrate Teddy Roosevelt's birthday. Put a picture of Wilma Rudolph or Daniel Hale Williams or Elie Wiesel or John Muir on the refrigerator and engage the kids in a mystery hero hunt. Every semester my college "soon-to-be-teachers" students hold a heroes' fair. Hundreds of local fifth- through seventh-graders come to campus to see and meet hundreds of heroes. The most thrilling aspect of this whole event is that now schools are doing their own versions of heroes' fairs and a wide assortment of special events. And, guess what? The kids love it!

In a wonderful Aug. 6, 1995, Parade Magazine article entitled, "Who Are Our Heroes?" the noted historian Dr. Daniel Boorstin explained the difference between heroes and celebrities in a brilliant few sentences. I hope intermediate grade and higher teachers will consider making this quotation a poster for their classrooms--what a dialogue it could spark:

The hero is known for achievements, the celebrity for well-knownness. The hero reveals the possibilities of human nature. The celebrity reveals the possibilities of the press and the media. Celebrities are people who make news, but heroes are people who make history. Time makes heroes but dissolves celebrities.

No doubt many parents and teachers have already taken up the cause. It is time for the rest of us to return great individuals to the pedestals they deserve. Young people need to see that humans can and do make a difference. Children can learn that they too are capable of reshaping life in a positive way. By reintroducing heroes to children, parents and teachers can show them that there are real people worthy of recognition and emulation.

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ORDERING INFORMATION

Send your name, address, phone number, and a check or money order made payable to "Heroes 4 Us" to:

Heroes 4 Us
P.O.Box 5269
Lancaster, PA 17606-5269

Prices

2006 Revised paperback edition - \$17.25
2001 hardback edition - \$21.50 - A purchase of 10 or more hardcovers is required to obtain this discounted price.

Prices for both editions include postage, handling and tax.

Missouri Council for the Social Studies

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We Are On The Web!
www.mosocialstudies.org

Creating effective citizens



Museum Spotlight

Truman Presidential Library and Museum

MCSS members are encouraged to attend the "Using History Museums, Historic Sites, and Archives

with Your Students" teacher workshop at the Truman Presidential Library and Museum. This workshop is held in cooperation with the Museum Education Roundtable (MER). Various MER educators as well as staff from other local history related sites will share with teachers their educational resources and will conduct hands-on activities. This workshop should appeal to elementary, middle/junior and high school teachers.

The workshop will be held Friday evening October 27th (4:30 – 9:00) and Saturday, October 28th (8:00 – 5:30). The cost is \$60.00 (includes Friday evening light snacks, Saturday breakfast, lunch, and teacher materials). One hour of graduate credit in continuing education will be offered through the University of Missouri - Kansas City for an additional fee of \$75.00. You will be given enrollment forms Friday night and will pay UMKC directly. Graduate credit requires attendance for the entire workshop, a 2-3 page reflection paper, or one lesson plan. The conference is limited to 50 participants. **Registration deadline is Tuesday, October 24th**. Reservations will not be accepted after this date. Refund requests must be received no later than Friday, October 20th. The final workshop schedule will be e-mailed to participants one week prior.

Contact: Tom Heuertz at 816-268-8241 or 1-800-833-1225 x 88241 <Tom.heuertz@nara.gov> Send completed registration below with a check for \$60 payable to the Truman Library Institute or charge card information to: Tom Heuertz, Truman Presidential Museum & Library, 500 West US Highway 24, Independence, MO 64050. Sorry, no school purchase orders.

