Recognizing Excellence:
Delaware Geographic Alliance
Announces Teacher Awards

The DGA Steering Committee has approved three awards for DGA members beginning with the 2007-2008 school year. The **Distinguished Teaching Award** will recognize Delaware K-12 teachers of any subject who demonstrate excellence in classroom teaching of geography content. One of the Distinguished Teaching Award applicants will be selected as Delaware’s **Geography Teacher of the Year**, and will be nominated by the Alliance for the national Distinguished Teacher award from NCGE. Travel to the NCGE Conference will be supported by the Alliance. Teachers interested in applying for this professional recognition should submit a nomination form to the Alliance office. Guidelines for submitting the required portfolio are available on the Alliance websites. The deadline for portfolio submission will be January 15, 2008.

Additionally, the Steering Committee may award the **Alliance Distinguished Service Award** to any member who has consistently supported and served the Alliance. The Distinguished Service Award will be presented as deemed appropriate by the Steering Committee.

DGA awards will be presented at the Alliance Annual Meeting in early spring.

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Fall Calendar of Geography Events

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**Geography Action! 2007 To Focus on Asia**

By Jeanette Franklin, Geography Action! Coordinator

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation establishing the third week in November as Geography Awareness Week. Since then, the National Geographic Society has sponsored **Geography Action!**, an annual conservation and awareness program designed to educate and inspire people of all ages about nature, culture and historic treasures. Each year a different theme is highlighted and some one and a half million people in the United States and Canada participate. The themes for the next several years will focus on the continents, with this year being Asia. The Delaware Geographic Alliance has gathered an eclectic array of lessons and activities that will help you, your students and your community, discover the diversity of Asia through, maps, cultural activities, photographs and more. Visit either of our websites to access the online brochure **Geography Awareness Week Publication 2007**. (Print copies available while supplies last.)
Delawhere?

By: Dr. Peter Mires, Contributing Editor
pmires@udel.edu

The study of place-names, or toponyms, has a long tradition within geography because names on a map contain a wealth of information. People often turn to a cultural geographer for explanations of where place-names come from and what they mean. Did you know that there is a United States Board on Geographic Names, and that some states even have place-name dictionaries? Delaware has its share of fascinating place-names, such as the Murderkill River in Kent County. That place-name is what linguists call a false cognate; it doesn’t mean what it looks like. Although you may be thinking CSI or Forensic Files right now, its meaning is actually quite innocent. The redundant-sounding Murderkill comes from Delaware’s period of Dutch settlement and is best translated “mother’s river,” and of course saying Murderkill River is bilingually redundant in the same sense as saying Rio Grande River. Can you think of any other watercourses in the region with that Dutch suffix?

Do other names on the map of the First State cause you to wonder? Geography’s agenda, after all, is “the why of where,” and some of the best questions have to do with how a place got its name. I invite you to write to me with place-names that capture your attention, and they will be featured in future issues of the DGA Newsletter.

Courtesy: Beers Atlas of Delaware © 1868

DGA Supports AP Geography!

During the spring semester of 2007, 22 students at William Penn High School in New Castle, DE accepted the challenge, enrolling in the school’s first-ever offering of AP Human Geography. For most of the sophomore level students it was a first exposure to the AP format. William Penn offers an array of AP courses, with at least five other offerings in social studies alone. The group was selected from Honors students at William Penn. Instructor for the course was busy instructor and coach Kristen Taggart who prepared for the course by attending a training session sponsored by the College Board at Woodland, Texas, during the summer of 2006. Support for this training was provided through a partnership with Colonial School District and the Delaware Geographic Alliance.

In an interview with DGA, Taggart was enthusiastic about teaching AP Human Geography. She reported that students enjoyed the practical applications of their learning to everyday life, including current events, and were highly engaged and positive about the experience. All of the students enrolled took the AP exam in May, with the exam fee paid by Colonial School District. 74% of the students earned college-level credit by scoring 3 or higher on a 5 point scale- a very good result indeed! But Taggart is not satisfied. She wishes that the course could be expanded to a full year course. (Most AP Human Geography programs are either year-long classes or are taught in a 90 minute “block” daily.) Although the school administration has been supportive, no schedule change seems likely. To hone her skills and build a support network, Kristen returned to Texas this summer for a dose of geography content and practical advice from veteran AP instructor Susan Hollier, again supported by DGA in partnership with the school district. To learn more about teaching AP Human Geography, email Kristen Taggart at ktaggart@colonial.k12.de.us.
How Smart Is Your Smart Board?

On TV, hi-tech spies use GPS technology to track criminals, or flash GIS maps on screens in situations rooms to analyze a potential terrorist threat. Popular computer programs like MapQuest and Google Earth bring the newest mapping technologies to personal computer screens and even cell phones. Increasingly, maps are digital and electronic, and constructed with a single purpose in mind. The wide availability of software and data has made mapmaking easier. Anyone, even our students- can do it! Alliance member Becky Reed recently called attention to a New York Times article entitled With Tools on Web, Amateurs Reshape Mapmaking by Miguel Helft (July 27, 2007) highlighting this trend. Users of new software create map layers, and add to existing data on file. They improve upon the maps we have, and these personal contributions benefit us all.

For the 21st Century classroom, the new GeoTech presents opportunities and challenges. Students respond well to the maps and images generated by these programs. They ask geographic questions, look for patterns, and suggest other map layers. Our challenge is to make sure that students have the skills to do reliable map analysis. This is the “teachable moment” for the principles of geography.

A secondary challenge for teachers is to keep current with the fast-advancing development of mapping on and off the Web. Using the products of the new technologies in the classroom is a first step, but many teachers are anxious to bring the excitement of mapping as a participation sport to their students.
DGA Summer Geography Institutes

The summer of 2007 found Delaware teachers back in the classroom, but this time as learners and participants in our Geography Summer Institutes for Teachers. Two separate one-week UD graduate courses attracted a diverse group of teachers from Delaware public and charter schools across the state, with teaching assignments from first grade through seniors in high school. Graduates reported a better understanding of the geography standards and how they can be effectively taught.

Twelve teachers attended the June 25-29 session in Georgetown, DE where the focus was on Maps and Mapping (Geography Standard 1) and on the How Humans Interact with the Environment (Geography Standard 2). Presenters included UD professor and Alliance Coordinator Dr. David Legates, Dr. Tracy DeLiberty (UD), Jeanette Franklin (Howard High School, NCCVT), Cindy Baker (Sussex Central Middle School, IRSD), Dawn Willis (Milford Middle School, MSD) and Maggie Legates, DGA Coordinator.

An overnight stay at the Karen Noonan Center, Blackwater Wildlife Refuge near Cambridge, MD was hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. This experience allowed participants a chance to look at the impacts of human activities on the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and the ways people must adapt to natural hazards.

Eight Delaware teachers gathered at historic Belmont Hall in Smyrna, DE July 9-13 for a closer look at the geographic concepts of Place and Culture (Geography Standard 3) and Region (Geography Standard 4). Dr. David Legates was joined by professors Peter Mires, April Veness and Peter Rees, all from UD, and by Judy Purcell (Milford Middle School, MSD), Jason Jeandell (Seaford High School, SSD) and Barbara Duffin, librarian at Banneker Elem, MSD) and Maggie Legates, DGA Coordinator, as presenters. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation hosted a daytrip to Rock Hall, MD where participants learned of the traditional way of life of the watermen, the impacts of human activity on the upper Chesapeake Bay, and the changes coming to the region.

All participants came away with a wealth of resources, ideas for effective teaching, and a plan for putting geography to work in their classrooms.
New Instructional Materials Developed by DGA

The Delaware Geography-Health Initiative, a set of teaching units developed specifically to address Delaware's high school geography standards, is now ready for distribution. Each unit is structured as an inquiry-oriented research problem for students to address, and uses a GIS-based approach. Modeled loosely on the Smithsonian science kits, the units represent the only "home-grown" products that focus specifically on Delaware topics that are available presently in social studies at the high school level. The teacher version includes a guide to teaching the units, DSTP-type assessments, background readings, references for the teacher, and visuals for use in instruction. The student version includes the materials needed for completing the research activities and student readings. The Alliance can provide classroom sets of the student version.

To request your free copy of the teacher version, contact the Alliance by email at maggielg@udel.edu or the primary author, Peter Rees at rees@udel.edu.

Geography Kits for 8th Grade

Under a partnership with Delaware Space Grant, DGA has developed a geography companion kit for the 8th grade Weather and Climate science kit. Entitled “Green Cities”, the kit includes readings, activities, and visuals that will be sure to engage students and help teachers reach their instructional goals!

Urban Heat Islands

This interactive lesson addresses Geography Standards 1 and 2. Students discover how urban heat islands impact our lives and ways in which humans are responding. The lesson includes a written article and offers practice with reading satellite images. Students create their own urban heat island profiles of the surrounding school yard. To learn more about this lesson, access it on the web site or contact the DGA office. We provide all of the equipment on a loan basis and free of charge. The lessons themselves are free.

Eco-Cities

The Eco-Cities lesson has been designed for middle school students and covers Geography Standards 2 and 3. Explore how settlements and cities in our country have adapted over time to become more or less “eco-friendly”. Concepts such as garden cities, green cities, and town planning are only a few of the important topics covered. Students will read articles and examine historic maps of eco-cities while learning how cities have changed over time. This lesson integrates well with 8th grade science units on weather. All lessons are free and will be accessible on the DGA website. Please contact the DGA office to learn more!

Wilmington Field Trip

Saturday, November 3, 2007
9:00-1:00 pm

Your geography guides: Joel Glazier and Dr. Peter Rees
More information at www.degeog.org

WANTED!

Teachers able to pilot 8th Grade Geography Kits
Contact: Maggie Legates
maggielg@udel.edu
Geography in History and Science

400 years ago Jamestown was founded, and the Chesapeake region has never been the same since! Teachers of American history and science teachers who help students take a closer look at how people interact with the environment will be equally interested in maps, activity packets, a website and a special video produced by National Geographic and the Nature Conservancy to mark the Jamestown anniversary. These items are available for free distribution from the DGA office:

- National Geographic maps – “Voyages of Capt John Smith” with modern Chesapeake Region on reverse side. And “A World Transformed” contrasting Native American and European use of the natural environment.
- Elementary School Activity packet “Chesapeake Bay” includes poster and student reading hand-outs.
- A limited number of DVD’s including video of the explorations of John Smith.

Helping Students Gain an Aerial Perspective

Aerial photos, satellite images, and aerial perspectives are all useful tools for helping students build their mental maps. Teachers who want to use these images have some great resources: A great website, Delaware DataMIL (http://datamil.delaware.gov) features aerial photo sets showing Delaware communities as they change through time. Sets of poster-sized prints of selected towns, suitable for classroom use, are available on loan from the DGA office. Each set comes with a set of lesson plans to help teachers use the prints effectively to teach the standards. To borrow a poster set, contact the Alliance office. All images are available online at www.degeog.org. A PowerPoint presentation entitled Looking Down is found at www.ngsednet.org/dga under Teacher Resources.

Alliance websites support you!

Delaware Geographic Alliance currently has two websites to support you. www.degeog.org: Information about upcoming events, workshops, and teacher resources are here. This site has a special section to support your celebration of Geography Awareness Week. www.ngsednet.org: This site is our connection to the National Geographic Education Foundation Network. It includes professional development opportunities, resources, and space for teachers to share ideas and projects. A big plus is the connection to other state Alliances and the National Geographic Society.

Kalmar Nyckel

Geography Teacher Sail
October 10, 2007
4:00-6:00pm
Free registration, but pre-registration a must!
Email riphifer@udel.edu or call 302-831-6783
Delaware

Settlements, 1800

Map Courtesy of Facts on File, Inc. 1984
**The Delaware Geographic Alliance**

**Invites You to Join Us!**

**Who is the DGA?**
We are an organization of Delaware K-16 educators from public and private schools, citizens, and professionals from other fields who have organized to improve geography education in our state. We have support from the National Geographic Society and the Delaware Department of Education. We started working together in 1989, and our numbers have grown ever since!

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**How to Join:**
Membership in the DGA is free!!!

To join, simply fill out the following information:

Your full name: _____________________________

E-mail Address: _____________________________

Mailing Address: ____________________________

_______________________________

_______________________________

Phone Number: _____________________________

School or Workplace: ________________________

Teachers, please include grade(s) and subjects you teach:

Grade(s): _____________________________

Subject(s): _____________________________

Please send this information to the Alliance office either by US mail, fax, or email.

**Thank You!**