Big Doings During the Summer
Social Studies-Reading Institute

By all accounts the June 18 to July 2 Social Studies Institute was a great success. The staff comprised two experts for each strand: Dr. Joe Pika and Dr. Nora Hyland in civics, Dr. Bonnie Meszaros and Dr. Jim O’Neill in economics, Dr. Peter Rees and Mary Anna Taylor in geography, and Fran O’Malley and Carole Wilkinson in history. Dr. Pika was the director.

There were twenty participants from K-5, each of whom was already quite knowledgeable in one of the strands. Each person was assigned to one of the remaining three strands and received a generous helping of content in that area. All were also trained or re-trained in making Binko presentations.

The culminating project was to devise a lesson integrating the two familiar strands and reading. On August 20, the entire group met at the Paradee Center to make their presentations to the staff and to invited district administrators. It is hoped that this experience will encourage them to continue this type of integration and to share with their colleagues what they’ve learned. We observed one such impressive presentation. If it was a fair sample of the quality of the presentations, some students are in for exciting social studies work this year.

Eight TCs were participants: Anne Deinert, Jen Frasher, Linda Haley, Betty Hudson, Doriel Moorman, Anabelle O’Malley, Judy Purcell, and Mary Schoettinger.

National Council for Geographic Education

The National Council for Geographic Education convention was held in Vancouver, British Columbia in August this year. In spite of the distance, several people attended. We’re especially proud of the four Teacher Consultants who received the Distinguished Teacher Award. It was awarded to only thirty-nine teachers nationwide this year, so Delaware garnered a more than respectable share.

The recipients, nominated by Dr. Peter Rees, were Claudia Hughes of Baltz Elementary School, Becky Reed of Gunning Bedford Middle School, Mary Schoettinger of Star Hill Elementary School, and Edna Turner of Woodbridge Middle School.

Extending the convention
Cruising the Inside Passage
by Mary Anna Taylor

After attending the NCGE Conference in Vancouver, my husband and I boarded the Radiance of the Seas for a memorable trip through Alaska’s Inside Passage. The days of the gold rush are long since passed but our trip offered many “golden” opportunities. Launched in April, the Radiance is a magnificent gas turbine vessel and it was smooth sailing all the way. See Taylor on Page 6

L - R, Becky Reed, Edna Turner, Mary Schoettinger.

Claudia Hughes was unable to attend.
**Mission Geography**

Are you interested in materials that engage your students in active, "hands-on" inquiry type learning activities? Do you need lessons that develop students' understanding of environment-society relations and earth science?

NASA and the geography community through the Geography Education National Implementation Project (GENIP) have entered into a partnership to produce such materials. **Mission Geography** is curriculum support material that links the content, skills, and perspectives of the National Geography Standards: Geography for Life with NASA's missions and scientific results. The materials, organized at three grade levels (K-4, 5-8, 9-12), are consistent with the National Geography Standards and support the Delaware Standards. The materials focus on ways NASA's missions use spatial analysis and other geographic skills to solve real-world problems. The materials use an investigative approach that teaches interesting and meaningful geography content by modeling geographic thinking and problem solving. They involve students in real-world contexts.

Each Mission Geography module consists of 3-4 investigative lessons. Each lesson is complete with background information, images, and briefings that educators and learners need to fully understand the featured concepts of the lesson. A lesson can be used independently or integrated into other curriculum studies. Other related curricular (science, mathematics, technology) standards are included in the lessons when appropriate. The module topics are as follows:

**Elementary (K-4)**

- Exploring Our Planet From Above
- Water, Water, Almost Everywhere
- Where On Earth Do Humans Live?
- Paths

**Middle School (5-8)**

- Volcanoes - Local Hazards, Global Issue
- Mars and Earth - The Quest for Life
- Human Footprints on Earth as Seen by NASA Scientists
- Remote Sensing and Geo-Archaeology

**High School (9-12)**

- What's Up With Earth's Water Resources?
- Where Will Your Next Meal Come From? Inquiries about Food, People, and Earth?
- What Are the Causes and Consequences of Climate Change?

During the summer two Delaware TCs, Mary Alice Aguilar (Redding Intermediate School) and Joel Glazier (George Read Middle School) attended the Mission Geography training workshop at Texas A & M University, College Station, Texas. The purpose of the workshop was to prepare teacher-consultants to disseminate the Mission Geography curriculum support materials. If you are interested in scheduling a professional development workshop on these materials you may contact the Alliance office (831-6783). More information about the materials may be found on the Mission Geography website.

Our selections this time have a number of themes in common: besides being nonfiction, both are travel accounts in whole or part, and both are at least partly concerned with the developing transportation technology of the nineteenth century.


Ambrose concerns himself here with the principal backers, movers and technicians involved in the post-Civil War effort to get a railroad line across the country, from the eastern lines already in existence to the Pacific. Since this endeavor was a huge stretch requiring literally herculean feats of both engineering and actual construction, it needed and got a few men of political influence to ease the way for government participation, a few men of financial power and influence to provide and otherwise find funding, a few men of vision and skill to discover manageable routes through some of the most intimidating terrain imaginable. Last of all, the project employed literally thousands of laborers, mostly Chinese toward the West and Irish toward the East. This was the last great building effort to be accomplished with only hand tools.

Abraham Lincoln was running for President in 1859 when he met Grenville Dodge at a convention in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Dodge was then a highly regarded railroad engineer, and Lincoln was a railroad lawyer, greatly interested in expanding the system westward. He immediately engaged Dodge in conversation regarding the best route (both central and southern were being considered) to the Pacific. After Dodge's assurances that the project was possible, Lincoln became and remained to his death its most prominent political proponent.

Theodore P. Judah actually founded the Central Pacific Railroad and surveyed and settled on the route over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Along with his wife, he was instrumental in persuading Congress to fund the project, both with actual money and with sections of land. It was he who pushed the project forward during the Civil War years and made it happen before others believed in its possibility; however, he died before any actual work was done.

Grenville M. Dodge, after serving heroically in the Civil War, took over as the chief engineer of the Union Pacific. Like Judah, he was responsible for choosing the important routes, those across the Black Hills, Wyoming and Utah. Before the war, he had convinced Lincoln that following the Platte River through Nebraska was the most practical choice, and he helped to foster bills in 1862 and 1864 that made the road possible.

These two men, along with numerous surveying crews not otherwise named, laid the actual groundwork that allowed the work crews to push forward, but most people, especially those with money to invest, thought the project was impossible of completion. All equipment and supplies had to be transported from the Eastern cities either by wagon across the plains or by ship around South America or be transshipped through Panama. That in itself seemed insurmountable to most people.

This is where the Big Four of the Central Pacific come in. Leland Stanford was president and also the main politician; Hollis P. Huntington was the money man, raising funds in New York, Boston and Washington, as well as lobbying Congress for funds; Charles Crocker was the general construction supervisor; Mark Hopkins kept the books. They gave hugely of time and support, putting their fortunes at risk, but they gained inestimable wealth.

As always with Ambrose, the prose is crystal clear and the research impeccable. We found it somewhat less smooth than his usual, but the one real drawback, and it is an enormous one, is that there are no maps. Except for the endpapers map which shows a few major difficult areas but no detail, there are absolutely no maps. This forced repeated recourse to atlases, but often they did not label the specific topographical formation one was looking for, not being tailored for those interested in early railroads.


At first glance, this book would appear to have little to do with the Ambrose one, being as it is a late twentieth century account of a trip taken by one principal and intermittently a few of his friends. However, since Heat-Moon was fulfilling a dream of traveling across the country from coast to coast in a small boat, he of necessity made use of the other major nineteenth century technology, that of canals. Of course, rivers comprised the major portion of his trip.

Some people may be put off by the literary device he uses to prevent embarrassment to any of the seven friends who joined him serially. We could find no reason for the subterfuge, since not one of the seven did or said anything that would cause him or her a blush. It did, however, provide the reader with the fun of trying to distinguish when the change between their stints took place. We were entirely unable to find any seams; Heat-Moon was extraordinarily careful with his pronouns and was so without any apparent awkwardness. His name for his companions was Pilotis, and he uses that title to avoid pronouns.

See River Horse, page 4
The “horse” was a 22-foot fiberglass C-Dory; they also carried a one-person kayak and a seventeen-foot aluminum canoe with a tiny motor for places where even the flat-hulled dory couldn’t manage. Heat-Moon christened his boat Nikawa, a combination of the Osage words ni, river, and kawa, horse.

The trip begins in New York Harbor where, in the first of many near-catastrophes, Heat-Moon nearly succeeds in sinking his little boat in the roiling wake of a lightly loaded freighter. Their route took them up the Hudson River to Troy and the beginning of the New York State Barge Canal. They had made special arrangements to be there just as the canal was opening after the winter and was being watered for the season. (This is the modern canal which runs along the same route, sometimes side by side, with the original Erie Canal that opened in 1825.) It was necessary to time the trip in this way so that the Missouri would have enough water to float Nikawa when they arrived.

Their first real scare came when they left the confines of the canal and the Niagara River (above Grand Island) and crossed a section of Lake Erie to Dunkirk. I can’t begin to touch the terror of Heat-Moon’s description of the lake trip:

“If you’ve ever made the long slow climb up the initial ascent of a rollercoaster, when it’s too late to disembark and before you is only heaven and fear, and if you remember that godawful pause before the cars drop into the screaming abyss, then you have a notion of what it was like that Saturday on the inland sea, except for one thing: we didn’t roll down the watery hills because they were too steep and close together. Instead of broad backs they have sharp crests which held us a moment before the engines drove Nikawa off the edge into the trough to a crashing, splintering, shattering collapse. We weren’t cruising on Erie so much as falling down it, during any given hour we were airborne a not insignificant portion. At first the drops were three feet, then four, then six, and after an hour a ton of boat was falling seven feet every couple of minutes.”

No other part of the trip was so scary or dangerous, but there were plenty of places where delays kept them thinking about the real possibility that the Missouri could be too low to negotiate when they arrived.

Space limitations prevent discussion of the many people they met, and the graciousness with which most helped them on their way.

Heat-Moon’s writing is, as always, full of charm, humor, humanity, and delightful and surprising twists in construction, such as the “screaming abyss” above. We had no real criticism except that the maps, which did nicely appear when needed, were less detailed than we would have liked. However, recourse to atlases paid off.

A Bonus Book Recommendation Home on the Canal, by Elizabeth Kytle, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983. A fascinating account of the building of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, including personal reminiscences.

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**Upcoming Events**

- **Oct 12** — Fall Social Studies Conference  
  Smyrna High School
- **Oct 15** — National Geographic Bee Deadline for registration
- **Oct 23** — GAW Workshop - Rivers 2001  
  Gunning Bedford Middle School
- **Oct 27** — Technology Review Workshop  
  Fred Fifer Middle School
- **Nov 11-17** — Geography Awareness Week  
  Theme: Rivers 2001
- **Nov 14** — T-shirt Where-In day
- **Nov 14** — Geographic Information Systems Day
- **Nov 17** — National Council for the Social Studies — Washington, D.C.
- **Nov 16 - Jan 11** — School Geographic Bees
- **Mar 14** — Delaware Geographic Alliance  
  Spring Dinner — date tentative
- **Apr 5** — State Geographic Bee

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**Geography Awareness Week**

As you see from the chart above, this year’s Geography Awareness Week will be from November 11 to November 17. The theme is Rivers 2001. Delaware has so many rivers that this should be of interest to all.

The Sussex County workshop to help prepare teachers to have their students participate fully was a huge success. The New Castle County workshop, which had to be postponed, will be held on October 23 at Gunning Bedford Middle School. We’re sure it will be equally successful. See Page 5 for more about rivers.

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**National Geographic Bee**

The number of Delaware schools participating in the National Geographic Bee has risen in the past few years, but there are still several schools missing out on this valuable experience.

To get a school into the act, its principal must send a letter requesting registration to Mary Lee Elden, National Geographic Society, 1145 17th St NW, Washington, DC 20036. The fee has been raised to $40; make the check payable to the National Geographic Society.

Any school which would like help may contact the editor (697-9896 or pkilleda@aol.com). She can provide a screening test to find those students who qualify for the school bee and can, if requested, run that bee. The school must have a staff member who will agree to supervise the testing and score the tests.
This Year’s Contest/Project

Get out your cameras, especially when you go for those nature walks. We’re expanding on the Geography Awareness theme and calling for pictures taken during every month of the year of Delaware rivers. Over the course of the year we’d like to see pictures of all of them.

The “rules” are very loose, not to say non-existent. Anyone of any age may submit one picture per month. No prizes will be given this time, but each month’s winners will be publicized in Focal Points.

Entries must be 3 1/2” X 5” or 4” X 6” color prints. On the back of the picture put the photographer’s name and address. Students should give their age and grade. No electronic entries will be accepted, and no photos can be returned.

Here are a few suggestions for taking interesting pictures of water. In general, unless you have specialized lenses, taking a huge area or a long stretch of water is not wise; all the drama and impressiveness is lost. However, if there is an element in the atmosphere which heightens the drama and forms a contrast to the water, such pictures can be excellent. In the example below, notice how the foreboding clouds above the water add to the turmoil. Also, the shutter speed was slow enough to allow portions of the falls to blur and give a feel of motion to the picture.

The second example points out that water by itself tends not to draw the eye in a picture as it does in reality. To focus the eye on the water, use riverside trees or some other natural or man-made objects; they tend to channel interest to what they frame — the water.

This final example shows two ways to make interesting pictures. One is to go early in the morning or late in the afternoon so that the sunlight is slanted and makes fascinating glints and shadows. The other is to center on something, not of but in the water to serve as a draw.

People add interest to almost all pictures. Remember that, if you photograph people, you must have written permission to display the photos in public. It’s best to show their backs.

Picture This — Without a Map, Please

1. You are in western Asia and having difficulty with a chain of mountains and a sea whose names differ by only one letter. Where are they both, and which is which?

2. Travel directly east from the Yucatan Peninsula to a divided island. You land at the more western capital city. Where are you and what language are the people on the street speaking?

3. Can you name three “colored” seas?

4. Name two Asian countries which are archipelagoes.

5. What U.S. state lies over a “hot spot”?

6. What North American bay has a bay?

7. What is a hadji, and where would you be if you observed one?

8. You’re at a high point over the ocean looking eastward towards Scandinavia. What type of seacoast do you see?

9. What U.S. state has two arc or circle boundaries?

10. What U.S. state borders more states than any other?

Answers on page 7
To spend a week on the ship would have been a treat even if we had not pulled anchor since it is truly a five-star floating resort. Captain Bill Wright (the only American captain of an international cruise ship) and his crew of 843 hailing from 59 nations did their utmost to make the 2266 guests have the time of their lives. But we won’t focus here on the delectable food or the marvelous amenities of the vessel since we are sharing this with a geographically minded audience.

Our first day was spent moving up the Inside Passage from Vancouver to Juneau. The passage is a maze of ‘forested islands and cliff-walled fjords.’ The weather, which was somewhat misty and overcast, seemed to add a primeval aura to the landscape.

The first port of call was Juneau (58° 25’N, 134° 30’ W). It is located on a narrow strip of land between the Gastineau Channel and the edges of Mount Juneau and Mount Roberts. Juneau’s population is approximately 30,000, spread over an area of 3108 square miles (the largest city in area in the U.S.). Some streets in Juneau are actually flights of stairs to the next level. Remembering the sagacious advice of our OSAE-ing advisor, (“always go to the highest point to get a lay of the land”) we took the tram up Mount Roberts. My fear of heights was temporarily subdued and we were quickly elevated to an alpine environment. From our birds-eye view at 3819 feet we could see the Gastineau Channel and surrounding countryside. The Mt Roberts visitors center included a restaurant and gift shop, and the Chilkat theater where we viewed the film Seeing Daylight that presented the history and heritage of the native culture. The tramcars are named Eagle and Raven, reflecting the importance of these creatures to the Tlingit people. As we descended the mountain, we marveled at the bald eagles roosting in the nearby trees.

We continued our exploration of the Juneau area on a guided tour. The first stop was at the Glacier Gardens. With the clever use of an earthmover the owner has turned the rainforest mountainside into a botanical garden and commercial greenhouse. Some 35,000 visitors enjoy his workmanship each year. A harrowing golf-cart ride up the spiraling mountainside transports visitors to the overlook to take in the panoramic view of the Mendenhall Wetlands.

Back on the tour bus we traveled a short distance out of Juneau to gaze at the Mendenhall Glacier. The Tlingit Indians call it sit aan taang -- the glacier beyond the town. It is awesome to see! And it is only about five miles outside the town. It is actually just one of the 5000 glaciers which have shaped Alaska’s landscape since prehistoric times.

Another stop took us to the Alaska State Museum to view the exhibits of Alaskan history, native culture and wildlife. The museum contains some 23,000 artifacts and works of art. The tour concluded with a stop at the fish hatchery. A fat and sassy harbor seal entertained us while the guide tried to educate us about the various kinds of salmon.

Back to the Radiance for more wonderful food and fellowship with our companions at Table 455. A very smooth overnight passage put us in Skagway in the morning. As was our custom by now, we turned to the Captain’s channel on our television to find our absolute location (59° 30’N, 135° 28’W). This little town of 806 is a living remembrance to the Klondike gold rush era. It still has the wooden boardwalks and a classic narrow gauge railroad. The White Pass Yukon Railroad is the oldest operating narrow gauge railroad in the U.S. Amazingly, the railroad (completed in 1900) was constructed to two years, two months, and two days. The urgency was the transporting of the gold seekers on their way to the Klondike. The brochure stated that it is “one of the great train rides of the world.” The sixty-mile ride in vintage parlor cars from Skagway to Carcross in the Yukon, offers breathtaking views of the landscape over cliff-hanging cuts, around hairpin turns and through the dark tunnels. Always in haunting view is the Trail of ’98. Why the narrow gauge you may wonder? It was man’s adaptation to the environment since the narrow gauge required a smaller turning radius and that enables negotiating the tight curves of the White Pass. A “nugget from the epic gold rush,” the WPYR now yearly transports some 300,000 passengers who would probably concur that this is one of the great train rides of the world.

From Skagway we journeyed back south through the Lynn Canal, west through the Icy Strait and out to the Gulf of Alaska and then north to the Yakutat Bay to view the Hubbard Glacier. It is an alpine glacier that begins 76 miles away on the slopes of Mt Logan (5951’ - tallest in Canada). The temperature was cool; the heavier jackets felt good and the crew was right there with hot chocolate! The majority of the passengers were out on deck and there was an excitement in the air. We were going up close to this huge mass of ice. Again, it was an awesome sight! It was unexplainable - why should a piece of ice be so compelling? Maybe the answer is because the Hubbard Glacier is the largest tidewater glacier in North America. It even calved while we were there. We should add here that Captain Bill did a masterful job of gently easing the Radiance within a few hundred feet of the Hubbard.

Ketchikan (55° 21’N, 131° 35’W) on Revillagigedo Island was our next port of call. It is a linear city of one-half mile wide and 7 miles long and has a population of 15,000. The town is about 4 blocks wide and, like Juneau, some streets are flights of stairs to the next level. Much of the town is built on pilings over the Tongass Narrows or precariously perched on the side of the cliffs. Even though Ketchikan is at the 55th parallel, the winter temperature averages in the mid-30s; summer averages are upper 50s to low 60s. This is the effect of the Japanese Current that also give Ketchikan its nickname the ‘rain capital’ of Alaska with an average of 150” per year. Our tour guide, a local science teacher, informed us that we just happened to visit on the twelfth sunny day of the year 2001. See Taylor, page 7
Taylor, from page 6

Ketchikan also boasts that it has more totem poles than any other place in the world. We were bused out to Totem Bight Park and walked among the towering totems. One could almost feel the presence of the early Tlingit natives as we rested in the massive Tribal House. Even though it was a bright sunny day, the walk through the rainforest was dark and eerie. But not to worry, we were shortly guided out and to the souvenir shop. Again, the tourism dollar is a vital source of income in this town. At day’s end we bid Thundering Wings, the very large totemic eagle near the town dock, farewell and returned to our float hotel to enjoy a final night on the ‘grand touring vessel’ Radiance.

Saturday morning we docked in Vancouver, British Columbia (49° 16'N 123° 06"W) having traveled 2201 nautical miles - beautifully smooth miles. What a way to explore the Inside Passage!

NASA Sponsors Odyssey

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is partnering with Odyssey of the Mind to develop an Earth science problem for the 2001-2002 year.

Founded in 1978, Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem-solving program for students from kindergarten through college, attracting students from 49 states, the District of Columbia and over thirty countries. Odyssey of the Mind competitions involve creative exercises in which teamwork, cooperation and ingenuity are applied to complete various tasks.

Students choose from one of six long-term ‘problems’ and form teams to develop solutions. The problems range in nature from the technical to the artistic, and solutions are judged for creativity, originality, and other criteria. In the spring, teams take their solutions to official competitions at the regional, state/country and world level.

The NASA-sponsored problem, named OMER’s Earthly Ad-
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