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FOCAL POINTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
DELAWARE GEOGRAPHIC ALLIANCE

Geography and Your Health

High school teachers: Want your students to rate your class as relevant, timely, of practical value? Health care, health insurance, disease prevention— all these are at the forefront of the national conversation these days! Geographic thinking can add immediacy to your class while at the same time help you accomplish important instructional goals.

Applying geographic thinking to real-world problems and topics is the approach taken by Peter W. Rees, director of a curriculum project especially for Delaware high schools. The Delaware Health Initiative is a set of teaching units in which students try their hand at geographic analysis. The approach is more than just a motivating gimmick. A hallmark of this program is the use of real data and real problems encountered by Delawareans. And each unit relates directly to a Geography standard. All of the units have been approved for inclusion in the State Recommended Curriculum. They are available without cost from the Delaware Geographic Alliance office. Contact Maggie Legates at maggielg@udel.edu. (more on page 7).

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DELAWARE GEOGRAPHIC ALLIANCE presents

Geographic Focus: Four ways to look at EUROPE!

Geography Awareness Week 2009
November 16-20
There are 50+ countries that make up Europe. For young geographers to explore the amazing world of Europe, the teacher handbook will get you started with questions and activities to guide your geographic thinking.

The focus is on these standards-based concepts:

- **Location** of countries and cities, landforms and landmarks
- **Humans Interact with their Environment** - green projects, problems and solutions
- **Places and Cultures** - The diversity of art and music, languages and customs of this colorful continent
- **Regions, Borders** - why and how the Europeans divide their land

For more resources, visit our Alliance website: www.dgalliance.org

The Delaware Geographic Alliance receives funding from the National Geographic Society and the Delaware Foundation.



Geography Awareness Week Activities with a European Flair

A good resource: *Classroom Companion– Stonehenge* available for free download at www.nationalgeographic.com.

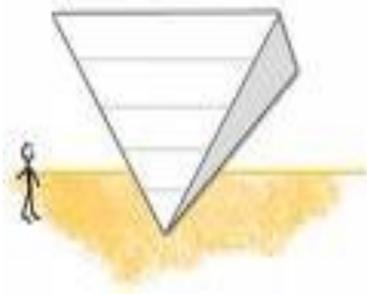
European Focus for Geography Awareness Week

Mark your calendars! **November 18-20, 2009** has been designated Geography Awareness Week. Schools across Delaware will sponsor special events to highlight the importance of geographic thinking.

On DGA websites www.ngsednet.org/dga and www.degeog.org find these:

- Teachers idea book “Geographic Focus: Four Ways to Look at Europe”
- Complete lesson plans, maps, graphics for projection
- Ideas for small projects and large events you can bring to your school!

A special DGA teacher's guide is now available online for download. Limited print copies available upon request.



THE GEOGRAPHER'S CORNER

The Inverted Pyramid of American Employment

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

The pyramid shape has so many instructional applications. Recall that chart of food groups in health class? It showed a healthy diet composed of recommended portions of carbohydrates, proteins, and fruits and vegetables. Or perhaps in this era of economic uncertainty you're thinking of speculative financial transactions. Turn that shape upside down and you'll see how economic geographers picture the precarious inverted pyramid of American employment.

Geographers have long embraced the notion that almost every occupation imaginable belongs to one of three sectors of the economy: natural resources, manufacturing, and goods and services. Often, these are called simply the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors. The whole organizing principle is how far removed any economic activity is from Mother Nature.

The sequence is actually very logical; natural resources (a.k.a. raw materials) are grown, raised, harvested, or otherwise obtained, transformed through the manufacturing process into a marketable product, and sold to the consumer. The automobile industry is an excellent, albeit changing, example. Iron ore (from places like Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range) is shipped to Detroit and fashioned into a car that is then transported to a dealership and sold to an eager buyer. As you might expect, primary sector jobs like farming, fishing, logging, and mining are tied to the bounty of natural resources. In the not-too-distant past in the U. S., say around the time my dad was born (1924), primary sector jobs formed a broad base for our occupational pyramid.

I came into the world (1953) when the U. S. was the undisputed leader in industrial output. We took it for granted that the best of everything was made within our borders, and the livelihood of many an American family depended on a manufacturing job. Somehow, nebulous entities—agribusiness and multinational corporations—crept into our vocabulary and American jobs vanished as a consequence. Now, most of us work in retail sales or we do things to and for other people. Think about it: How many farmers, fisherman, loggers, and miners do you actually know? When was the last time you were in America's steel town, or you bought a pair of Levi's blue jeans? Well, Pittsburgh's steelworker folk hero, Joe Magarac, now works in the IT industry downtown, and Levi Strauss's grommet-reinforced cotton pants designed for the rigors of the California Gold Rush are no longer made in America.

Chances are that most of your acquaintances, like you, work in the goods and services sector of the economy. Like me, you either sell something to someone or you provide some kind of service. I'm not suggesting that American agriculture or industry is faltering; far from it. Mechanization and the economy of scale have increased agricultural production, and outsourcing, especially in labor-intensive industries, has allowed U.S. manufacturing firms to remain competitive in the global marketplace. The result, however, is that primary and secondary sector jobs in the U. S. have declined precipitously with no rebound in sight. As a geographer, I'm interested in the changing nature of land and life. I recognize that the agricultural revolution beginning some 10,000 years ago allowed for a surplus food supply and settled villages. The industrial revolution beginning some 250 years ago produced surplus value and wealth for manufacturing nations. And the term "post-industrial" has been applied to our current era. I'd argue that we're still sorting that out.

As much as we'd like to embrace life in the new digital age, where wealth comes from mastery of electronic devices, I'm not alone in my fear that the inverted pyramid of American employment leaves us vulnerable.

A few years ago I traveled to the American Southwest and marveled (at a safe distance) at erosional landforms where large boulders balanced atop narrow geologic formations. Undermined as they are, these rock features eventually will collapse. Perhaps there's an economics lesson in that landscape as well.

Our Network Works!

Tech-minded Alliance members contribute and draw power from our grid.

Alliance member **Jim Hendberg from Lake Forest S.D.** shared this reference regarding the use of **social networking sites in the classroom**: *Fear of iPods and Facebook in classrooms does not compute* - Yahoo! News http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20090826/cm_csm/yfabiano Yahoo! News <http://news.yahoo.com/>

Our question: **How do teachers feel about harnessing the power of social networking for lessons and activities? How can we safeguard against the "cheating" fear/pitfall? What are some creative ways to get students using technology (as opposed to watching the teacher using technology) in meaningful, effective ways?**

Tom Gavin, Third Grade Teacher, Eisenberg Elementary, Colonial S.D. writes:

1. Most teachers are not aware of social media sites where collaboration occurs. My push now is to build a twitter network of educators. Of course like our students, there has to be buy in! I have thought of few ways [for] this to occur.

2. There are lots of ways to put tech into students hands. I have students use an 80 dollar video camera to record themselves acting out vocab words. Students also use MP3 Players and social bookmarking sites as well as viewing podcasts.

Tom shares his favorite tech teaching techniques on his website at <http://tgavin.com/>

Share Your Sources!

Kristen Taggart, Social Studies Department Chair at William Penn High School , Colonial S.D.

writes: "Could you please advertise this site: <http://aphgteachers.wikispaces.com/>

It is a wiki I made (targeted for APHG teachers, but is good for any geography content. Please encourage our teachers to join and post their materials to share with others throughout the world who teach Geography.

Also encourage teachers to join the APHG [Advanced Placement Human Geography] discussion group, which sends out great resources every day. Teachers can join that site by going to <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/homepage/4340.html> There are a lot of resources that are easily adapted to all different levels of geography.

Check out Kristen Taggart's website at <http://www.e2t2c2.net/penn/taggart>



Summer in the City-

Chicago, Illinois– In July Milford Middle School teacher Kristin Schlegel traveled to Chicago, Illinois for a special professional development opportunity– National Geographic Society’s Summer Leadership Institute. The second leg of a two-year training program, this session was designed to prepare teacher leaders for the Alliances. Participants will share what they have learned in workshops in their home states. The experience was energizing. The training program was based on a curriculum developed by National Geographic in anticipation of Geography Awareness Week 2009. *Mapping Europe* combines geographic thinking with hands-on ac-

tivities for a big learning impact.

Kristin will unveil parts of the new program in two upcoming Alliance-sponsored workshops. October 21st at North Georgetown Elementary School and October 26th at Dover Central Middle School.



Summer Geography Institute for Teachers– Newark

July 2009 found fourteen Delaware teachers, working in grades 3 through high school, gathered at the Department of Geography on the University of Delaware campus in Newark for a special graduate class designed to increase geography literacy– for them and for their students. The institute concentrated on Geography Standard 3 (Place and Culture) and Standard 4 (Regions). Teachers received a variety of instructional materials, references and resources. Sessions included some timely and useful information, hands-on lessons and lab experiences, the expected fieldwork– and a few surprises. Dance professor Lynette Ogelby led the group in exploring a sense of space and place through movement. Joe Ambrosino, music teacher in Christina SD, shared ideas for teaching social studies in music class. Other special presenters included UD Geography presenters Peter Rees, David R. Legates, and April Veness. Staff members included Dom Zaffora, Woodbridge S.D., Cathy Cooper, National Geographic Society, and Maggie Legates, DGA.

Field assignment: Checking out Transportation and Connections in Newark

Participants in the Geography summer institute for teachers in Newark this summer worked in teams to gather data and analyze the effects of transportation forms on the local landscape. Using historical documents, interviews, field observations and web research, the groups evaluated the effects of railroads, auto transport and bicycles and pedestrians in the local landscape. The conclusions: Railroads are old news, cars dominate, and a lot of work needs to be done to make Newark bike friendly.



DGA Fall Calendar

Fall Workshops for Teachers K-12

- Format: General theme session followed by break-out sessions for elementary, middle and high school teachers
- Three- hour practical workshop introducing materials and activities for Geography Awareness Week and beyond!
- Three locations and dates– choose one to fit your busy schedule!
- Easy, free registration– email maggielg@udel.edu. Give your full name, teaching assignment and contact information, and the session you wish to attend. A light supper will be provided. Donations accepted. Clock hour certificates available.

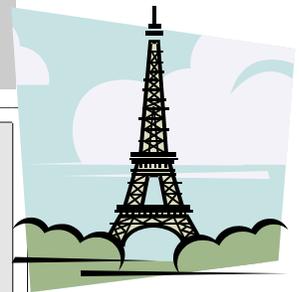
All workshops 5:00-8:00, registration begins at 4:30

Select one:

October 15– Gallaher Elementary School, Newark

October 21– North Georgetown Elementary School

October 26th– Dover Central Middle



Coast Day– October 4th–

Coast Day, a celebration of our relative location, will again attract crowds of interested Delawareans and visitors to the University of Delaware's Lewes Campus on Pilottown Rd. Sponsored by the new College of Earth, Ocean and Environment, this is a major public education event in Delaware. The theme this year is **Climate Change and Our Coast**.

The Delaware Geographic Alliance will be on hand with an exhibit explaining the effects of past variations in ocean levels and helping visitors visualize the likely effects of projections for the future.



DGA can be found under the big white tent with the Department of Geography. Stop by and say hello!

**Geography Awareness
Week Nov. 16-20**

GIS Activities– sponsored by Delaware GeoEducation

November 18th—GIS Day at Air Command Museum, Dover. DGA will provide student activities to support this event.

Student Contest- The theme for the 2009 Student mapping contest. "Maps Tell the Story: Plan for the Future" is a theme with broad application across the curriculum. Several categories are available for K-12 classrooms. Entry deadline is **December 18, 2009**. Winners will be announced at the State GIS Conference in February. For the contest flyer and rules, click on Resources, or visit the sub-committee website at www.mygeoworld.org.

DGA to Embark on Three-Year Strategic Plan

Since DGA was established in 1989, we have been proud members of the National Geographic Society's Alliance Network. National Geographic has consistently supported our work within Delaware, and it has also provide national-level leadership, coordinating the efforts of the State Alliances so that we can be more effective. After twenty years of progress, and millions of dollars expended, NGS has decided the time is ripe to assess our present situation, review our goals, and take the time to build a detailed and comprehensive strategic plan. DGA has recently received a grant from the NGS Educational Foundation to support this process.

The goal of the network is to have 80% of America's young people leave school *geographically literate* by 2020. But what does that mean? One of our first tasks will be to define geographic literacy in terms Delaware students, teachers and parents can understand. What will it take to bring Delaware graduates to this level? How can we work together as a team to make geographic literacy a reality? This is the challenge facing our strategic planning team.

Members of the DGA Strategic Planning Team are Alliance Coordinators Margaret Legates and David R. Legates, Peter Mires, Claire Birney, Colleen Leithren, Domenico Zaffora, and Allen Sylvester. The Strategic Planning Team will report to the Alliance Steering Committee on a regular basis through-out the process.

Teaching Geography is Fundamental

The National Geographic Education Foundation has worked closely with geography education professionals and members of Congress to develop legislation, in both the Senate and House of Representatives.

The Teaching Geography Is Fundamental Act ("TGIF") has been introduced in the 111th Congress as S. 749 (by Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) and Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT)), and as H.R. 1240 by Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and fellow Congressmen Roy Blunt (R-MO), Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) and Tim Walz (D-MN). TGIF was designed to ensure federal support for geography comparable to the eight other core academic subjects identified by the No Child Left Behind Act. In order to ensure that all young people acquire the vital geography skills and experience they need, TGIF supports the following objectives:

- Increase student knowledge and achievement in standards-based geography.
- Increase the number of highly-qualified teachers in geography. Encourage research in geography education and development and dissemination of instructional materials , best practices, and model programs.
- Assist states in measuring impact of geography education.
- Leverage and expand private and public support for geography education partnerships.

Support the TGIF legislation. Write to your senators and representative and tell them you support TGIF.



**The bad news:
Geography is the
only core academic
subject that has not
received designated
federal funding
since NCLB went
into effect in 2002**

Delawhere?

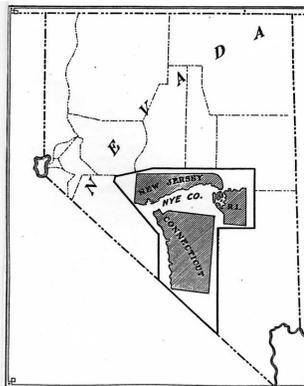
By: Dr. Peter Mires, Contributing Editor
 pmires@udel.edu

Many a Delawarean has had the experience of having to explain that Delaware is indeed a state (the First State, in fact). It's not unusual for others, especially those living west of the 100th meridian, to think that we're merely a county of some Eastern state such as Pennsylvania or Ohio. Perhaps not until people began collecting state quarters issued by the U.S. Mint, or the selection

of Joe Biden as Obama's running mate, has there been a general awareness of our state at the national level.

Here's a somewhat humorous example: the accompanying illustration is from a 1911 Nevada Historical Society publication. The caption reads, "NEVADA AS COMPARED WITH EASTERN STATES IN SIZE. In the East are States, several of which could be set down side by side within one of our great western counties."

Don't get me wrong, I love Nevada and I've seen Nye County up close and personal, but this cartographic faux pas also illustrates Delaware's invisibility in the minds of many.



NEVADA AS COMPARED WITH EASTERN STATES IN SIZE
 "In the East are States, several of which could be set down side by side within one of our great western counties."

Harrington Wins National Honors

Wendy Harrington, third grade teacher at Milton Elementary School, is Delaware's Geography Teacher of the Year 2009. Recently we were notified that Wendy will receive still another honor!

The National Council for Geographic Education will award Wendy its prestigious Distinguished Teaching Award at a special ceremony during the its Annual Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Congratulations, Wendy!



Health issues in the news (continued from front)

The following units are included in this set:

- AIDS Plays No Favorites (G1B- Problem solving with maps)
- Planning Medical Services: Locating Delaware's Next Hospital (G1 Hierarchy)
- Getting Care to Everyone: Develop a Network of Pre-Natal Care Centers (G4 Regions)
- Cancer and the Environment: Is There a Link? (G2- Environment)
- How Long a Wait: Analyzing Delaware's Emergency Services (G1 Accessibility)
- Predicting the Spread of West Nile Fever (G1 Diffusion)
- Where Are the Healthiest Places? (G3 Place)
- Data to Maps and Using GIS

Delaware Geographic Alliance
UD Department of Geography
216 Pearson Hall
Newark, DE 19716

Phone: 302.831.6783
Fax: 302-422-6743
Email: maggie@udel.edu

Mailing label here:



Health Issues with a
Geographic Perspective

IMPORTANT REMINDER TO SCHOOLS

With students grades 4-8

Registration Deadline for the National Geographic Bee Competition is October 15, 2009.

School principals may register through
National Geographic Society Headquarters
at National Geographic Bee
1145 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

Check www.nationalgeographic.com for
registration details.

The Delaware Geographic Bee will be
held on April 9, 2010.

Join the Delaware Geographic Alliance

The Delaware Geographic Alliance is an organization for you! Membership is open to all teachers, student teachers, geographers and geography professionals, parents—anyone who understands that it is vital for our youth to know more about the world.

Membership is easy: Access one of our websites, click on “Join Now” and answer a few simple questions. There is no membership fee, there are no required meetings. But there are benefits!

Some benefits of Alliance membership:

1. Good, standards-based professional development opportunities.
2. Print and web resources for teaching and learning—distributed free through state mail, websites, and workshop distribution.
3. Networking with professionals who care and who work to make a difference!
4. Travel and study opportunities.
5. Recognition for teacher contributions.