

## Editor's Notebook

In this issue of *Social Education*, the last of the school year, our authors focus on providing creative suggestions for teaching social studies, with a special interest in the use of literature, the arts and music. Among the articles, lesson plans and recommended trade books, our readers will hopefully find enjoyable summer reading, as well as teaching tips and resources that can enliven their classrooms in the coming year.

Our Teaching with Documents article is jointly authored by a historian and an arts educator, Lee Ann Potter of the National Archives and Elizabeth K. Eder of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. They describe the evolution of the Preamble of the Constitution from draft to final form, and present Mike Wilkins's sculptural recreation of its celebrated words as a modern example of artwork it has inspired. Teachers can pique students' interest by showing them our cover or inside photograph of Wilkins's artwork (an arrangement of license plates from the different states), and asking them to examine its message and historic importance. The teaching suggestions in the article will help students interpret the Preamble and other historic documents.

The struggle to ensure the right of reporters to protect their confidential sources has been long and often bitter since its inception in 1848, when a *New York Herald* reporter was jailed by the Senate for refusing to reveal the source of a report. On several occasions in the last five years, courts have judged reporters to be in contempt for not revealing sources, and journalists have demanded stronger shield laws to protect the confidentiality of sources. In our Looking at the Law column, Natalie West examines the recent challenges to journalists and the legal issues raised by shield laws, while Tiffany Willey suggests activities that bring the subject into the classroom.

When Staci Anson spent \$500 purchasing World War II artifacts on eBay, her history students were the main beneficiaries of the auction. "When I started teaching with these artifacts, I was amazed at how much more involved my students became." (165) With the help of these and other resources, she was able to provide students with a realistic view of the daily lives of the soldiers as they made history in the war.

For his Internet column, C. Frederick Risinger searched the web for sites that help to integrate literature and the arts into social studies instruction, with a particular interest in those that may not be known by many teachers. His selection ranges from websites that are educator-created to those that present the artwork of museums, all of which offer invaluable information and tips to teachers seeking to enliven their lessons and engage their students.

Michael G. Lovorn, an expert in the use of music in the social studies classroom, shows how folk music can introduce students to one of the most poignant disasters of the Depression


era, the Dust Bowl. Using the music of Woody Guthrie as a stimulus, he presents handouts and activities that enhance students' historical knowledge and literacy skills. Intended for students in the fourth and fifth grades, this activity can also benefit students at higher levels.

The center of this issue is a 16-page pullout with the latest list of Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People. These books, published in 2008, have exceptional social studies value as well as outstanding literary qualities, and have been selected by a committee of NCSS members in association with the Children's Book Council. The books cover the range of social studies. Accompanying annotations describe their contents as well as the social studies standards themes to which the books relate.

The Trade Books list is complemented by another set of distinguished books for children and young adults, the Carter G. Woodson award-winning books of 2008. The Woodson awards honor exceptional books that educate young people on race and ethnicity in the United States. This year's selections range from the *Amistad* slave mutiny to the history of black and white airmen in World War II, and from the stories of great sportsmen like Louis Sockalexis and Duke Kahanamoku to those of musicians, including notable female jazz singers and Vincent Collin Beach, who had a 22-year career as a member of the U.S. Airforce military band.

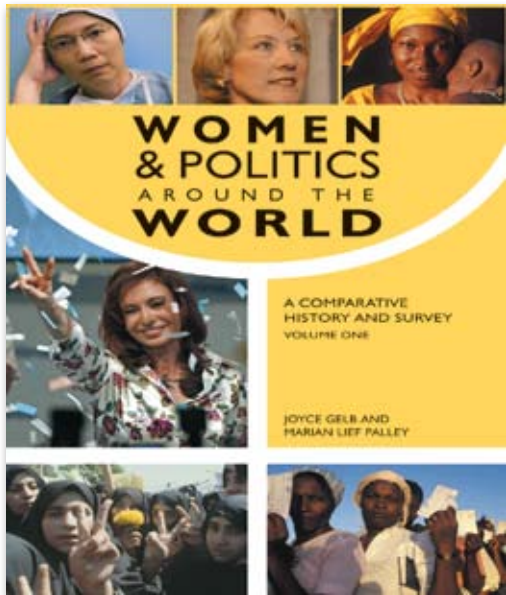
In our Research and Practice column, Kathryn Au discusses research on culturally responsive teaching, which, she points out, is necessary to "close the achievement gap between students of diverse backgrounds and their mainstream peers." (179) In response to the question, "Isn't culturally responsive instruction just good teaching?" her answer is an emphatic "no." Her review presents culturally responsive approaches that work in a variety of different classroom structures—whole class lessons, teacher-led small groups and student-led small groups—and offers guidelines for teachers about supporting individual and independent work by students.

Staging a crime scene is Nancy Peterson's lure for teaching students about laws governing search warrants and the rules that police investigators are obliged to follow. When her students discover a "murder" in their school, they need to acquire a quick knowledge of the procedures for investigation and the arrest and trial of suspects. By the time the class has worked its way toward a trial and final verdict, students have a detailed understanding of famous Supreme Court cases such as *Miranda v Arizona* and *Gideon v Wainwright*.

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

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