

Arkansas Geographica

Newsletter of the Arkansas Geographic Alliance Fall 2007



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Coordinator's Corner

by Dr. Brooks Green



I really liked the fact that 7th grade students in Arkansas were being taught geography and were leaning about the regions of the world. It has become vitally important for American citizens to become more geographically literate and to become more aware of and have a greater geographic understanding of global events. It appears; however, that 7th grade world geography has been stricken from the curriculum with the adoption of the new Social Studies Frameworks. I deeply regret that loss!!

Yet, all is not lost! (I am trying to be optimistic!) The new Frameworks are supposed to guarantee that every student in Arkansas, in grades K – 8, will have geography taught to them. While I would like every student to have a full year of geography or more, “embedded” geography is better than nothing!! If taught and properly taught, students across the state will learn geography and they will become more geographically literate. I understand that the most popular measure of geographic literacy is to know where places are, but that is NOT a good measure. Better measures would be to know and understand 1) the physical and spatial characteristics of places and applications of geography, 2) how cultures around the world develop and change, and 3) the interactions between people and their environment. These aforementioned items happen to be the three geography content standards in the new Frameworks. My hope is that they will be taught!

As I see it, it will be one of the responsibilities of the Arkansas Geographic Alliance to carefully monitor the implementation of the Frameworks in grades K – 8 in all schools across the state. We need to be watchdogs (I don't think anyone else will) to ensure that the geography strand is taught! And, we need to be watchdogs to ensure that the geography strand is well taught! Given that mission, we need to organize ourselves so that we can determine if the geography strand is being taught and we need to make sure that teachers who may be teaching the geography strand have the skills to do so.

Finally, this Newsletter will reach approximately 4,000 teachers who have an interest in geography education. It is vital that every one of those professional educators makes sure that the geography strand is taught in the appropriate classes at the appropriate grade level in their schools. If that happens, and if workshops are held to provide training for teachers who need assistance teaching the geography strand in the new Frameworks, geographic literacy will improve and the loss of the 7th grade geography course won't be as dramatic as expected.

Geography in the News

by Dr. Jeff Allender

Are all earthquakes and fault zones interconnected?

Last week, two small earthquakes in Arkansas were mentioned in the news by local reporters, one near Harrison and the other near Oil Trough. In both newscasts, the closing comments included mention of the New Madrid fault in northeast Arkansas. As teachers, we know that our students are fascinated when we discuss the great New Madrid earthquake of 1811-12, and it's in just about every Arkansas history or geography text. But these two, small tremors wouldn't even have been noted without the sensitive seismic equipment, and Harrison and Oil Trough aren't anywhere near where northeast Arkansas meets the boot heel of Missouri. Were these reporters falling into the same “trap” that our students often do, that being, if it's a seismic event in Arkansas, it must be from the New Madrid fault?

If you want to brush up on what earthquakes are, how they're formed, and especially where and why they occur in Arkansas, I recommend a wonderful five page monograph titled Arkansas Earthquakes by John David McFarland of the Arkansas Geological Commission, published in the Arkansas Naturalist, Vol. 2, No. 8, August, 1984. A brief synopsis of this article states that while there are many fault zones in

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Focus on a TC – Dora Bradley



Dora was born in Crossett, Arkansas, which was predominantly a small mill town. Her family moved to Morrilton when she was 12 where she attended Morrilton High School and completed AP courses on campus at Arkansas Tech during the summer of her junior year in high school. With other coursework taken during the year and testing, she had accumulated the equivalent of her freshmen college year before starting her first year at Texas A. & M. She graduated from there in 1975, with fields of English and history. She taught in Texas her first year, then left with her husband to go to Maryland, Alabama, and Nurnberg, Germany. She taught all levels of social studies in Zirndorf and Erlangen, just outside of Nurnberg.

Dora notes that "all of these places were so different from Arkansas. I could say it was an eye-opener on the world." On returning to the states, Dora's family lived in Minnesota before returning to Searcy, Arkansas, where she got her master's in education with a specialist certificate in reading at Harding University. She later became employed with North Little Rock Schools in 1988, where she began teaching geography at Lakewood Middle School. Dora notes that "teaching geography was the closest thing to traveling and seeing the variety of all the cultures in the world."

It was at Lake Wood Middle School that Dora noticed a disparity in the education methods being taught by math and science teachers and those being taught by social studies teachers. She found that students had little desire to read the textbook, and to reach them, she needed to use other methods, more "hands-on". Dora notes that "holding the attention of seventh graders was more and more difficult as technology competed with our students' time and imagination." She found help from Jerry Hanson and the Arkansas Geographic Alliance. While attending the summer institute, she said, "I learned more about geography and more ways to teach students of varying learning styles. It was so much fun! I couldn't wait to share that with students." This was where she had her earliest exposures to geographic information systems and satellite imagery.

Dora says that "I had more fun teaching geography than I had anything else in my entire life. I always found something exciting in every workshop." In later AGA workshops, she was able to go on to learn more about geographic information systems, Web pages, and other new technology. Being associated with the AGA and being a teacher consultant enabled her to participate in NASA's Mission Geography at Texas A. & M., to go through National Geographic's Alliance Leadership Academy, and to become an AP Geography Trainer of Trainers. The AGA needed help in building its first Web site and establishing its listserv. Dora notes, "Thankfully, Brooks Green asked me to participate in a team culture study of Russia in the summer of 2001, which again allowed me to travel to distant lands. Russia had been our enemy during the cold war; this was an opportunity for me to see passed the Iron Curtain and into lives of common ordinary people. I have enjoyed sharing this information with my students since our return."

In 2003, Dora completed her second master's in geography at the University of Arkansas with all the credits accumulated from AGA workshops and geography courses from the U of A. Technology has undergone an amazing change since her earliest work with geographic information systems. She says, "I truly loved the ability to work with these programs and had a greater dream to share this information with my students. Many of the students became involved with GIS in the GLOBE program implemented at Lakewood. I later was able to teach geography at UA Community College in Morrilton and at UCA, another dream fulfilled."

Dora has worked with Marie McNeal to develop a high school level geography curriculum. They have yet to have enough requests for the class, though she hopes to someday teach it and AP Geography. Dora says that after she retires from public school, she hopes to continue teaching at the college level.

Her one fear is that with the changing of the curriculum to more modern formats, that geography will be discarded as something unimportant. She states, that "as we have all heard before, we need to stand on our soap boxes and spread the word about the importance of geography education. If it's important to know events in history to avoid the errors of the past; it's important to know geography to know the "how" and "why" of the future."

TC Activities

Paul Gray The new APHG Teacher's Guide was published this fall. Paul was a co-author. This document is now available in a downloadable pdf at http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/repository/ap07_humangeo_teachersguide.pdf. Please e-mail Paul at paul.gray@rsdmail.k12.ar.us if you have APHG in your school. If you want information on how to get APHG started at your school, contact Paul!

Jody Musgrove conducted a Pre-AP Geography Institute for teachers at the

University of Oklahoma; attended an Institute at the University of Colorado entitled "Visualizing Japan: Teaching Japanese History Through the Arts. He said that it "definitely had a geographic focus, albeit more cultural than physical. I will us a lot of that information with my students and sharing it with other teachers." At the Arkansas Curriculum Conference, Jody will present a session entitled "Top Ten Ideas for Teaching about Japan in the Twenty-first Century." It will be for teachers of grades 9 - 12.



An Update on TGIFA

There are two bills before Congress that are directly related to geography education. In the House of Representatives is HR 1228 and the Senate is S 727. These bills are both titled: Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act. The intent of this Act is: "To improve and expand geographic literacy among kindergarten through grade 12 students in the United States by improving professional development programs for kindergarten through grade 12 teachers offered through institutions of higher education." Additionally, when the No Child Left Behind legislation was passed, nine subjects were part of the legislation, but only eight received funding. The one that did not receive funding was geography. This Act, if passed, will rectify that funding issue and greatly expand each state's ability to improve geography education.

To date, forty Congressmen have signed on to support this important legislation. Two of them are Marion Berry and John Boozman. Our other two Congressmen have not: Vic Snyder and Mike Ross. Eighteen U.S. Senators of signed on to support this legislation. One of them is Blanche Lincoln. Mark Pryor has not signed on to support it.

What is wrong with Congressmen Snyder and Ross, and Senator Pryor? Are they against geography education? Are they against improving the geographic knowledge of students? Are they opposed to our students being competitive on the world scene? There is no reason why Snyder, Ross, and Pryor should not support this legislation. Please contact their offices in Washington D.C. and in Little Rock and let them know how disappointed we are in their lack of support of the geography education of students in Arkansas and across this country!!!

National Council for Geographic Education



Registration is well underway for the 2007 NCGE Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City. The meeting will be held at the Cox Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City, October 18 – 21, 2007. This is Oklahoma's centennial year, so it will be an exciting time to participate in this meeting.

If you are participating in the NCGE Meeting, please contact Drs. Green or Allender. The Arkansas Geographic Alliance will contribute to your meeting expenses.

Plans for the Future

The Steering Committee of the Arkansas Geographic Alliance is busy preparing for the coming year. The Committee has been restructured so that there are now three subcommittees: Professional Development, Public Awareness, and Public Policy. Each of the subcommittees will have specific responsibilities related to geography education. For example, the Professional Development subcommittee will make plans to increase the number of schools that offer AP Human Geography courses, organize workshops for teachers in private schools, and write a proposal to the Wal-Mart Foundation to get funds to implement a 6th grade educational initiative. The Public Awareness subcommittee will conduct state-wide MyWonderfulWorld.org and Geography Action! campaigns. The Public Policy subcommittee will develop a plan to visit key government and education officials and develop workshops for parents of home-schooled children. Additionally, the Alliance leadership will attempt to find a way to better communicate with Alliance members, attempt to engage more professional geographers in the Alliance, and hold workshops for pre-service college students.

The Arkansas Geographic Alliance is active in trying to improve geography education across the state. If funding is received from the National Geographic Foundation, we will be nicely positioned to accomplish the plans noted above.

MyWonderfulWorld.org

by Julie Hill

In July, I traveled to Washington D.C. to attend a National Geographic Institute to learn more about the MyWonderfulWorld campaign and to be trained as an advocate for the Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act. This was a fabulous experience with the content and teaching strategies focused on Asia. A Washington, D.C. marketing firm helped us develop short talks about the importance and need for geography education. Each state representative visited with legislators or legislative assistants from their respective states.

I visited with the education liaison in Senator Mark Pryor's office and a legislative assistant in Representative Vic Snyder's office. Both visits were encouraging and they took notes concerning geography to report back to the legislators. However, Pryor and Snyder have not yet agreed to be cosponsors for the bills supporting geography education. Senator Blanche Lincoln, Representative Marion Berry, and Representative John Boozman have agreed to cosponsor the senate and house bills. All teachers in this state can do their part by contacting their legislators. If they have agreed to support the bills, then thank them and if not, ask them to support geography education. If teachers, friends, and family will

log on to www.mywonderfulworld.org and scroll down the left side of the page, there is a link to contact legislators. This is so quick and easy. When you type in your zip code, a list of your legislators comes up. You may then choose to use the prepared letter, write your own, or edit the existing one.

The Website has 3 main components, students, educators, and parents. There are so many resources available and lots of fun stuff too. I am pushing the parent section as a way to increase parental involvement. If anyone would like posters, postcards, tattoos, or stickers, please e-mail me and I will mail them to you. The teaching strategies were presented by the Washington, D.C. Alliance and they did a great job. The institute participants were also guests at the Indonesian Embassy one night. If you need more information or materials, please contact me: Julie Hill: julie@conwaycorp.net.

gained from the GEOSTRIDE program to enhance the students' learning. The teachers love the materials and could not wait to get them to their classrooms."

Summer Workshops

GEOMATH--Crowley's Ridge Educational Cooperative, Harrisburg, July 16 by Cheryl Green

OurWonderfulWorld - Looking at the Arkansas Social Studies Frameworks Through the Eyes of Geography, Crowley's Ridge Educational Cooperative, Harrisburg, July 19 by Cheryl Green

OurWonderfulWorld, - Looking at the Arkansas Social Studies Frameworks Through the Eyes of Geography, Northeast Educational Cooperative, Walnut Ridge, July 26 - Cheryl Green



The 2008 Geographic Bee will be held Friday, April 4, at the University of Central Arkansas. Start watching for information from National Geographic so your school doesn't miss the deadline to register. If your school has not participated in the past and would like to, log on to www.nationalgeographic.com and contact them to have the registration packet sent to your school.

In the News, con't.

Arkansas, they tend to fall into three geographic groupings. The first is the Central-Southcentral Arkansas seismic area, running from the Texas panhandle to northern Mississippi through central Arkansas. These faults have numerous, but little earthquakes and the energy is primarily left over compression and stress from the building of the Ouachita Mountains. The second is the East-Northcentral Seismic Area in the area around Sharp County. While assumed to be related to the upper Mississippian Embayment, it's not well understood and may be related to a seismic zone running north to St. Louis. It also has small earthquakes and is not expected to produce large or damaging quakes.

The third is the New Madrid Fault Zone. It is the one we all tell our students about, and is the result of a failed attempt by the proto-North American Continent to split apart over 600 million years ago. The "crack" that formed, named the Reelfoot Rift, still shifts around today and it was a major movement along this fault in 1811-12 that produced the largest earthquake in recorded North American history. This fault zone is by far the most dangerous, not only because it's the only one in the state that produced major earthquakes, but it's buried under thousands of feet of wet mud, the worst place to have an earthquake, and cities such as Memphis and St. Louis are on or near it, making future disasters more likely.

Between December 1811 and March 1812, over 1,800 earthquakes were recorded in Northeast Arkansas, with four being catastrophic at over magnitude 8, and several dozen being damaging at over magnitude 5. If (or more accurately, when) there is similar movement along this fault zone, the results would be devastating for the region. Memphis would be hardest hit, and in Arkansas, Crowley's Ridge would suffer major damage with notable structural damage all the way to the Little Rock area. But the little tremors that rattle dishes or feel like the shaking of distant thunder in other parts of the state are probably different faults, still adjusting to a slowly moving tectonic plate and remnant pressures of the distant past.

GEOSTRIDE Activities

Cheryl Green reports that "Cross County School District had 15 teachers participate in a 2 day summer workshop, held July 30-31, at the Cross County Primary Library and computer lab. Teachers included grades 3-6 classroom teachers, 2 elementary resource, 2 junior high/high school resource, K-12 GT teacher/coordinator, K-8 Math Coach, 7th grade geography, 8th grade history, civics, and American history high school. The teachers are very excited about the materials that they received and are busy planning on the implementation of the materials into the classroom. Our intermediate, grades 4-6 students and teachers have laptops as part of instruction this year. They will be able to use many of the experiences and resources

Geography Action! 2007 Asia-A Continent of Contrasts

By: Sheri Bickel

The Arkansas Geographic Alliance and the National Geographic Society invite you to participate in Geography Action! 2007. Geography Action is taking on the world, one continent at a time. The theme this year is Asia. This program highlights the beauty and diversity of one of the most fascinating places in the world. Join us in celebrating and learning about Asia.

Geography Awareness Week is November 11-17, 2007. Mark your calendar and start planning now. The website (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geographyaction>) for Geography Action will be up and running by October 1. It will feature lesson plans, activities, games, and much more. Be sure to check it out. Information on how to plan for GAW in your school and ideas for day-to-day activities will be posted on the AGA listserv.

The Arkansas Geographic Alliance is sponsoring a Postcard Contest. Students will illustrate something related to Asia for the picture part of the postcard. On the other side, they are to write a brief explanation describing their picture and how it relates to Asian culture. They need to write their name, school address, and teacher's name in the space where the address would normally go. The categories are K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Any medium is acceptable, and the postcards can be no larger than 9 X 12. The winning student and teacher will each receive \$50. Entries can be sent to Sheri Bickel, 746 CR 504, Berryville, AR 72616 by December 1, 2007. Winners will be announced the following week.

You, the classroom teachers, are a vital part of this or any other program. Check out your community to see what resources you have available. Many of the local Asian restaurants will give special prices for egg rolls, rice, etc., for schools. The BCAP (Bringing China to Arkansas Program) has sent many Arkansas teachers to China. They make great resource people for presentations. You may have musicians, artists, or people who have visited or lived in an Asian country that would be willing to speak to your classes.

If you are interested in having a parent night at your school, CelebAsia, might be what you are looking for. It includes easy to-make games from Asia, as well as art, origami, music, etc. This will also be posted on the AGA listserv in the near future. If you are interested in learning more about GAW or Geography Action, please feel free to contact me (sbickel@bobcat.k12.ar.us). Posters and two-sided world maps are available at no charge. Look for more information on the AGA listserv and website.

The **Darfur conflict** is a complex crisis in the Darfur region of western Sudan. One side of the armed conflict is composed mainly of the Sudanese military and the Janjaweed, a militia group recruited mostly from the Arab Baggara tribes of the northern Rizeigat, camel-herding nomads. The other side comprises a variety of rebel groups, notably the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement, recruited primarily from the land-tilling Fur, Zaghawa, and Massaleit ethnic groups. The Sudanese government, while publicly denying that it supports the Janjaweed, has provided money and assistance to the militia and has participated in joint attacks targeting the tribes from which the rebels draw support. The conflict began in February 2003. Unlike in the Second Sudanese Civil War, which was fought between the primarily Muslim north and Christian and Animist south, almost all of the combatants and victims in Darfur are Muslim. The combination of decades of drought, desertification, and overpopulation are among the causes of the Darfur conflict, because the Baggara nomads searching for water have to take their livestock further south, to land mainly occupied by non-Arab farming communities.

The government and Janjaweed attacks upon the non-Baggara civilian populace have resulted in a major humanitarian crisis. There are many casualty estimates, most concurring on a range within the hundreds of thousands. The United Nations (UN) estimates that the conflict has left as many as 450,000 dead from violence and disease. Most non-governmental organizations use 200,000 to more than 400,000; the latter is a figure from the Coalition for International Justice that has since been cited by the UN. Sudan's government claims that over 9,000 people have been killed, although this figure is seen as counterfactual. As many as 2.5 million are thought to have been displaced as of October 2006.

The Sudanese government has suppressed information by jailing and killing witnesses since 2004 and tampered with evidence such as mass graves to eliminate their forensic values. In addition, by obstructing and arresting journalists, the Sudanese government has been able to obscure much of what has gone on. The mass media once described the conflict as both "ethnic cleansing" and "genocide," and now do so without hesitation. The United States government has described it as genocide, although the UN has declined to do so. In March 2007 the U.N. mission accused Sudan's government of orchestrating and taking part in "gross violations" in Darfur and called for urgent international action to protect civilians there.

After fighting worsened in July and August, on August 31, 2006, the United Nations Security Council approved Resolution 1706 which called for a new 17,300-troop UN peacekeeping force to supplant or supplement a poorly funded, ill-equipped 7,000-troop African Union Mission in Sudan peacekeeping force. Sudan strongly objected to the resolution and said that it would see the UN forces in the region as foreign invaders. The next day, the Sudanese military launched a major offensive in the region. In the meantime, the conflict expanded into part of the broader Central African War.

The dire situation in Darfur dates back to March 2003 when the predominantly Muslim militants of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) started attacking government forces and installations in the western region of Sudan. The militants accused the government of President Omar al-Bashir of neglecting the region and oppressing black Africans in favor of Arabs in the state of Darfur. About 60 percent of the people in the area are subsistence farmers, with the rest being nomadic or semi-nomadic herders. The government, caught by surprise by the militants' attacks, had very few troops in the region. In response, it mounted a campaign of aerial bombardment in support of ground attacks by an Arab militia, the Janjaweed, that it had recruited from local tribes.

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“As the world becomes more interconnected through technological advancement and shared concerns about economic, political, social, and environmental issues, the need for geographic knowledge increases. Conditions and events occurring around the world, in industrialized nations as well as less developed ones, affect the social and economic well-being of our citizens. Increased economic power and initiatives of other nations, changes in their politics and policies, and their abilities to affect global environmental quality validate the need for our nation’s students to be internationally competent 21st-century voters, workers, parents, and leaders.”

*Geography Framework for the 1994 and 2001
National Assessment of Educational Progress
National Assessment Governing Board
U.S. Department of Education*