President’s Message

Welcome back – and may the excitement of an election year like none we’ve seen in our lifetimes keep your students engaged. If we can’t convince our students that history and social studies matters in the face of all that has gone on in the last year we really need to rethink our mission. It has never been more apparent that we need an educated and informed public that can engage with the issues of the day and not simply hurl insults at people with opposing views. The process to reach that goal starts in each of our classrooms.

If an active, informed and engaged public is our goal you need look no further than our up-coming state conference on October 17. On page 3 you will find further information about the conference and the CCSS website provides an opportunity for you to register. Please sign up and join your colleagues for what promises to be a timely and exciting program. Among many offerings will be a chance to share experiences and possibilities as we continue to roll out and implement the Connecticut Frameworks.

Unfortunately, it seems that we are in the midst of a particularly challenging era in our nation and across the globe. Social injustice, nationalism, xenophobia, terrorism - all connected in so many ways - have risen (again) to coalesce into a zeitgeist characterized by a simmering sense of tension and unpredictability that has no doubt found its way into our classrooms, schools, and communities. As much as we have struggled to comprehend this new normal, imagine the confusion, fear, and growing sense of disillusionment that many of our students are experiencing as the realities of the world become the defining moments of their generation. They have questions, concerns, and justifiable anxiety as they grapple to piece it all together into a coherent, understandable whole. They need us now more than ever.

(continued on page 2)
President’s Message - continued

These past few months and years have been at turns fascinating and dismayingly. For every story of selflessness, redemption, sacrifice, forgiveness, and the awesome power of good people doing great things, we witness ignorance, intolerance, greed, and hatred being perpetrated and celebrated. The histrionic rhetoric, demagoguery, and sheer lack of factual accuracy have been amplified, feeding into increasing dogmatism and callousness. Those who expel invectives, eschew logic, and exude ignorance have dominated the discourse for too long now. We are better than this.

So, indeed, now more than ever, we as social studies professionals must continue to do what we do best. We must intensify our focus on the core values inherent in our schools’ mission statements and the very ideals of education in a democratic society: to cultivate thoughtful, knowledgeable, compassionate individuals who are globally-minded, lifelong learners, and responsible, active citizens. It is too important an obligation to take lightly. Whether it is having students engage in meaningful, memorable inquiry investigations or taking informed action to increase awareness, fight for a cause, share new learning, or stand up for what is right, we are at the forefront of the vital work of ensuring our students are prepared for this increasingly confounding world in which we live, with all of its ugliness and enmity intertwined with unity, graciousness, goodness, and hope. Now more than ever, let’s be certain, that through our steadfast efforts, the latter prevail.

Please Note: Yankee Post is Available Only Online at www.ctsocialstudies.org

To receive Yankee Post via email, and notification of a new issue... please join CCSS and send your email address to: ctsocialstudies@yahoo.com

Editor’s Note - continued

Finally we urge you to get involved. In the spring of 2018 NERC will be coming to Connecticut. We will need many hands to lighten the work to make this region-wide conference a success. Each of you can start by joining – or rejoining – CCSS and NCSS. Each of you can pass the word and perhaps a printed copy of Yankee Post to a new colleague and urge them to join. As always, a copy of the membership form is on the last page of this issue.

And don’t hesitate to share your talent with us at Yankee Post. If you’ve had a challenging summer experience or have some exciting approach to teaching your subject, write it up and send it in. You can find a great example on page 5. Have a great start to the year.

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Join CCSS: See Membership Form on page 13.
The Connecticut Council for the Social Studies is excited to announce that it will hold its 2016 Fall Conference, on October 17, 2016. The conference will be held at the Radisson Hotel Cromwell, 100 Berlin Road, Cromwell, Connecticut.

We all know that leadership matters, therefore this year’s theme **Action – Taking Charge of Change** reflects the notion that all of us must take responsibility for driving the change processes within our districts that support meaningful and relevant social studies instruction for all of our students.

To help in that endeavor, this year’s conference will provide the opportunity for attendees to interact, in a meaningful way with classroom teachers and leaders who have successfully implemented inquiry instruction and assessment, rewritten curriculum, and use integrated social studies literacy skill in the classroom as outlined in the Connecticut Core Standards.

Multiple workshops sessions will touch on the successful implementation of the Connecticut Social Studies Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Frameworks, the inquiry process using Connecticut resources, and assessing inquiry at the K-12 levels, to name just a few. A wide variety of exhibitors and museum personnel will be on hand to assist in your evaluation of new instructional materials that embrace the inquiry process, engage learners, and provide creative thinking and problem-solving activities.

This year’s Keynote and Panel Speakers bring a passion for history and an exceptional dedication to quality public and civic education.

**Jahana Hayes**, 2016 National Teacher of the Year and 2016 Connecticut Teacher of the Year

**Kenneth C. Davis**, author of "Don’t Know Much About History."

**Denise W. Merrill**, Connecticut Secretary of State

**Elena Tipton**, Connecticut’s first ever Kid Governor

**Dr. Dianna Wentzell**, Connecticut’s Commissioner of Education

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State Department Activities

The Connecticut State Department of Education and the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies are co-sponsoring two upcoming webinar series.

On September 14, September 21 and October 5 there will be a webinar series from 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. on “Teaching the 2016 Elections”. This series will provide high school, middle school, and elementary school teachers with content knowledge, teaching strategies, and resource materials to assist in teaching this year’s elections in their classes. The webinar series will be archived for those who cannot participate live.

On October 13, October 20, and October 27 there will be a webinar series from 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. on “Teaching about the Middle East”. This webinar series will provide content knowledge, teaching strategies and teaching materials to assist teachers in effectively teaching about this critical region of the world. This series will be helpful to all teachers who that teach about the Middle East. The webinar series will be archived for those that cannot participate live. This webinar series is also sponsored by PIER (Programs in International Educational Resources) at Yale University.

To register for one or both of these webinar series or if you have additional questions, contact Mr. Stephen Armstrong, Connecticut State Department of Education Social Studies Consultant, at: Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov or at (860) 713-6706.

Red, White, and Blue Schools

The Red, White, and Blue Schools designation program is available to all of Connecticut’s K-12 schools. Each year, a theme will be announced by the Red, White, and Blue Advisory Committee. Schools are encouraged to teach the theme through interdisciplinary activities, whole school events, extracurricular clubs/activities, student-centered learning and community outreach.

Themes: Each spring, the theme for the following school year will be announced. In 2016, the theme is the electoral process. Possible future themes include local government and local history, civic engagement, state government, federalism through the three branches, etc.

Registration: School principals or principal-designees may register to indicate their interest in participating by completing the registration form.

REGISTER HERE: Contact Stephen Armstrong, CT Social Studies Consultant, at Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov

Participation Criteria

- Whole School Events: Hold a whole school activity (e.g. mock election) – demonstrated through a percentage of students or classes that participate.
- Interdisciplinary Activities: 2-3 disciplines, including social studies, integrate electoral process topics into their courses.
- Innovative Approaches and pedagogy in social studies classes when teaching the electoral process.
- Extracurricular clubs, activities, sports – participate in or organize activities promoting the electoral process (optional).
- Community Outreach: Work with local community organizations, businesses or government entities to increase student knowledge of implications and effects of elections on the community.

2016-2017 TIMELINE

May 2016 – Program announcement and press release
June 2016 – Teacher webinar; CCSS PD session; Everyday Democracy Civic Health Index event
August 2016 – Superintendents’ meeting; CCSS PD session; registration deadline; schools begin work on their electoral process projects
September 7, 2016 – Introductory webinar on the Red, White and Blue Schools program; registration information to be announced
October, 2016 – Late afternoon/early evening program for teachers involved in the Red, White and Blue schools program; details to be announced
January 2017 – Schools complete work on their electoral process projects
March 2017 – Submission deadline for project materials
May 2017 – School designations and award winners announced; culminating event with finalist schools

Submission of Materials

Official guidelines for the submission of project materials will be shared in Fall 2016. Project materials should include a narrative with evidence, including pictures, project links, media stories, and videos. The project narrative will address the theme and how a whole-school approach was used to teach the theme. The narrative and evidence should illustrate how your project meets the criteria as described in the project rubric.
Over a twenty-four day period starting in mid-June, we traveled to Europe to study the Refugee crisis with a grant from Fund For Teachers and the Dalio Foundation. We traveled to Munich, Belgrade, the Greek/Macedonia border, and Athens, with each stop along the route presenting us with an opportunity to look at a different aspect of the crisis.

In Munich, we focused on the question regarding what awaits the refugees in Germany. While we were there we volunteered at a transit center for refugees where we worked in the clothing depot. We were also fortunate enough to visit a school for unaccompanied minors in Kaufberuen, Germany. In addition, we also met with Scott Woodard at the U.S. Consulate in Munich and interviewed him about both the U.S. and German government’s response to the crisis.

In Belgrade, we worked with Refugee Aid Serbia to help distribute evening meals to refugees. In addition to our volunteer work, we were also able to meet with Sam Healey from the US Embassy who is coordinating the US efforts regarding the refugee crisis. We also had a meeting with Ivan Miskovic from The Serbian Commisarate of Refugees, to understand the Serbian government’s position on the situation. After spending several days there, we ventured north to see what life was like along the Hungarian border and saw the border fence that had been erected to keep refugees from entering.

In Northern Greece, we saw the remnants of the unofficial camps that sprung up along the Greek/Macedonian border. Later, we saw the more current, official camps, built by the Greek government. We volunteered at one of these camps running soccer drills for children. Along the way we talked with refugees and interviewed everyday citizens to hear their perspectives on the crisis. Finally, we finished in Athens where we will met with volunteer workers and refugees. The trip was capped off with a meeting with delegates from SYRIZA, the current ruling party of Greece.

Some of our best experiences were talking with the refugees themselves, who despite the language barriers, just wanted to tell their story of trying to seek a better life for themselves. They were not just statistics in the news, but intelligent, personable, funny, resilient people who have seen things that most of us could never imagine. Still, they managed to thank us, engage us, and at times, with humor, remind us, that we are all very similar. We spend so much time talking about our differences in race, gender, religion, and culture that we sometimes forget that we are all just people.

If that message can be passed on to our students, even just in a small way, we will have succeeded in helping our students become better global citizens in this ever-changing world.
Looking for an unforgettable Holocaust story for your middle and high school students?

Surviving the Angel of Death: The True Story of a Mengele Twin in Auschwitz is the story of Eva Mozes Kor, who was a 10-year-old from Hungary when she and her family were sent by cattle car to Auschwitz. There, Eva and her twin sister, Miriam, were put into the care of Dr. Josef Mengele to undergo sadistic medical experiments, while the rest of their family was sent straight to the gas chambers from the selection platforms. In a narrative told with emotion and restraint, readers will learn of a child's endurance and survival in the face of truly extraordinary evil.

The book also includes an epilogue on Eva's recovery from this experience and her remarkable decision to publicly forgive the Nazis. Through her museum and her lectures, she has dedicated her life to giving testimony on the Holocaust, providing a message of hope for people who have suffered, and working toward goals of forgiveness, peace, and the elimination of hatred and prejudice in the world. To learn more and for discount purchasing information, e-mail Ayanna@tanglewoodbooks.com.

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Evidence is mounting that at least part of John White’s lost colony may have ended up in Bertie County. Archaeologists have excavated 850 square feet of the tract in question and found dozens of artifacts including bale seals used to verify cloth quality; 16th-century nails; firing pans from snaphaunce guns of the day; aglets used to form tips on shirt lace strings; tenterhooks used to stretch hides; pieces of pottery jars for storing dried and salted fish; and bowl pieces like those found in Jamestown.

The findings do not prove Lost Colony residents lived there, but they certainly show they could have, said Clay Swindell, archaeologist and collections specialist at the Museum of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City. A member of the First Colony Foundation, Swindell reported last week on the recent findings and conclusions drawn from them at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. He shared them with a reporter Thursday.

The rural site south of the Chowan River bridge has been inhabited for centuries first by Native Americans, then early English settlers, Swindell said. Later it became the site of a governor’s plantation. The ground is high and dry and lies next to the river, ideal for habitation. “It’s got lots and lots of different time periods represented,” Swindell said.

A series of events led to the discovery of Site X. In 2007, a developer planned to build a large subdivision there. As usual, the state first required a search for historically significant sites or artifacts. A team found early English pottery and signs of a Native American village. Meanwhile, the development never panned out.

In 2012, researchers looking at a map that John White drew of eastern North Carolina in the 1580s found a patch covering what looked like a fort. The map is still preserved at the British Museum in London. The fort symbol sat at the western end of the Albemarle Sound in what is now Bertie County, matching where the English artifacts were found. “We put two and two together,” Swindell said.

Before he left for England in 1587, John White told the colony to “remove 50 miles into the main.” That clue did not help archaeologists much at first, since a 50-mile radius from Roanoke Island covers most of northeastern North Carolina. “No one had a good understanding where the 50 miles might be,” Swindell said.

The Bertie site lies 49.32 nautical miles (or 56.76 miles) from Roanoke Island, according to Google Earth. Researchers are continuously discovering how the artifacts and writings may tie the Lost Colony to the Bertie site. The North Devon baluster jars used to provision ships with dried or salted fish were used in the late 1500s. The Surrey-Hampshire Border ware matches hundreds of pottery fragments found in early Jamestown, but was not used that much past the early 1600s. The explorers of the day wrote about the Chowan River and the tribes that lived there. “That location is something they were familiar with,” Swindell said.

John White was part of all three Walter Raleigh expeditions from England to the North Carolina coast. In 1585 and 1586, he made the map preserved at the British Museum. In 1587, he returned to Roanoke Island with a group that included his daughter, Eleanor Dare, and son-in-law, Ananias Dare. Eleanor gave birth on Aug. 18 to Virginia, the first English baby born in the New World. He left the colony shortly afterward to resupply.

White could not return until three years later. By then, the colony was gone. He found the word “Croatoan” carved in a post and CRO carved into a tree. The Croatoan tribe lived around Buxton. Years later, Jamestown leaders sent a party south to search for the colonists, but bad relations with Native Americans hindered the effort. The party never made it to the Bertie site, Swindell said. The recent discoveries do not indicate a fort as was shown on the map, but only show evidence of a smaller group of early English there.

“We have new clues,” Swindell said. “That’s all we can say, there are new clues.”

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Massachusetts activists want high school history to stress political activism over founding principles

New Boston Post  By Sandra Stotsky  | August 26, 2016, 6:12 EDT

In another year, parents may notice a change in emphasis in the history and social studies curricula at their children’s schools. Where once American history courses focused on our country’s founding principles, their roots, and their application, soon such courses may start to emphasize political activism and the grievances of various subgroups in American society. These changes are taking place on the recommendation of a small, stealth committee appointed in 2014 by the chair of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). The changes are intended to dramatically alter the Massachusetts History and Social Science standards, which enjoyed broad bipartisan support when adopted in 2003.

Where once high school American history courses focused on our country’s founding principles, such courses may soon start to emphasize political activism and the grievances of various American subgroups. At the time of its adoption, the History and Social Science Curriculum Framework was fully supported by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, Board of Education, Governor’s Office, and key legislators. At most grade levels, the standards integrated history with the relevant content of geography, civics/government, economics and related concepts and skills. At the high school level, the document allowed for two continuous years of study of U.S. history.

To unify study of U.S. and world history across the grades, the document suggested several overarching themes on the origins and development of democratic principles, democratic institutions, and individual freedoms. Although regarded as among the best in the nation, the Massachusetts History and Social Studies Curriculum Framework was not without its critics. After all, the 2003 curriculum framework is not a politically correct document; it addresses the U.S. and rest of the world honestly, without a double standard. The U.S. history standards offer, in grades 3-5 and high school, strong standards on the Framers and the Founding, on our political principles and institutions and their origins and evolution. And they stress the Founding as politically revolutionary, not as a reflection of the thinking of slave-owning sexists.

The Massachusetts standards adopted in 2003 tied American and World history together with overarching themes on the origins and development of democratic principles and individual freedoms. The world history standards clarify the roots of Western Civilization (a moral code stressing individual worth and personal responsibility), explore the origins of democratic institutions and principles, and address the presence, nature, and history of slavery in non-Western as well as Western cultures up to the present.

At the time of its adoption in 2003, critics—several superintendents and so-called multicultural educators—said the document was too Eurocentric. In particular, they complained of insufficient standards on native Indian tribes and on Africa, Asia, and South America before the 16th century. They complained that the standards on Islam were biased—if not outright racist —because they addressed both positive and problematic aspects of Islamic civilization (such as asking students to learn about the trans-African slave trade to the Middle East from the 7th to the 20th century and to explain why Islamic societies failed “to keep pace” intellectually, technologically, economically, militarily, and politically with Europe after 1500). They complained that the Frameworks lacked “overarching” themes (because they did not like the overarching themes on the evolution of democratic principles and personal freedoms). And they charged that the document would require students to learn too many facts and leave little room for “creative” teaching.

The critics tried to delay the vote on the standards, and then to delay implementation of the standards by the schools. Nevertheless, as the state began development of the History and Social Science MCAS exams to measure student achievement in these disciplines, most Bay State high schools steadily—if slowly—began to implement the standards.

But critics ultimately succeeded in 2009 in getting the state board to postpone the first administration of the grade 10 exam, at which point implementation in some towns ground to a halt. As noted by Tom Birmingham, former Senate president and a co-author of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, a History/Social Sciences MCAS test that would be required for a high school diploma was ready to be given when the administration of Governor Deval Patrick jettisoned its implementation, citing the “cost” of administering the test and remediating students who failed. BESE later voted to postpone the grade 10 test indefinitely, in effect killing the requirement itself.

Not surprisingly, critics complained the standards were too “Eurocentric” and convinced the Board of Ed to drop the History and Social Science 10th grade MCAS test. Not content to have killed the test and eliminated the incentive for school districts to fully implement the standards, some critics are now pushing to revise the standards themselves, claiming that the 2003 document lacks encouragement of political activism. Bouncing off a 2012 legislative report prepared by former State Senator Richard Moore, the critics got a “working group” appointed by BESE to deliver the coup de grace to the 2003 Framework. This “Working Group on continued on page 9
Civic Learning and Engagement” was appointed single-handedly by then BESE chair Maura Banta, deliberately excluding history and government teachers in Massachusetts public schools. Its report was presented in June 2015 to BESE.

Most members of this Working Group were unknown to K-12 teachers and to the field of history or political science then and remain unknown to this day. Not only did Massachusetts history and U.S. government teachers (never mind academic historians and political scientists) not participate at all in the “working group,” they have never been informed that its June 2015 report asked for revision of the 2003 K-12 history/social science standards, with no reason given for a revision of these standards. Critics are now pushing to revise the standards themselves, claiming that the 2003 document lacks encouragement of political activism.

Nor have they been told that BESE accepted the June 2015 report and all its recommendations in the fall of 2015, and that all the 2003 history, geography, economic, and civics and government standards are to be revised by a committee whose membership is now being formed by DESE staff and Secretary of Education James Peyser as I write. (A supplementary document providing standards for “civic engagement” could just as easily have been recommended.) Because of the “stealth” process in which it was developed (described in the introduction of the report), the 2015 report of the Working Group on Civic Learning has been largely ignored by the Massachusetts press. As a result, very few parents or other citizens to this day know what this group recommended.

In the fall of 2015, BESE voted to accept all the Working Group’s recommendations despite the fact that its report contains no analysis of the 2003 History/Social Science standards. Nor has DESE or BESE sent a survey out to the state’s high school and college-level history and government teachers asking them what revisions, if any, they would suggest for these 2003 standards or asking for their participation on the committee now being formed to make changes in the 2003 Framework.

The 2003 history, geography, economic, civics and government standards will now be revised quietly and behind closed doors by stealth committees and without appropriate educator input. Most important of all, no one seems to know that the 2015 report recommended, among other things (pp. 14-15), the establishment of “regional advisory councils”—to take the place of local school boards on matters of “civic learning.” It suggested no details on who would appoint the members of these “councils,” how they would function, or what their legal status would be. Why BESE accepted such a recommendation without broad public discussion and legislative input is unclear.

Parents and others should press to find out what changes the standards revision committee (now being formed) has proposed by means of public comment drafts before BESE makes them a fait accompli. They will want to pay special attention to whether their children are being taught to become “global” citizens or active but informed American citizens.
Mel Gibson’s The Patriot

In 2000, Mel Gibson released The Patriot. On one level, one could view the movie as another stirring action story in the tradition of Braveheart. If the characters in the movie weren’t exactly historical that was OK; it was set in a real war with real locations and the good guys won. The movie wasn’t intended to be “the true story” of some specific individual or individuals, so relax and enjoy the entertainment.

There were certain caveats which rendered the escapism troublesome. Certainly the British didn’t fare too well as human beings. They were more in the tradition of Romans or Nazis in the Gibson universe. More troubling perhaps was Gibson’s presentism. Presentism refers to the retrojection of cultural values of the present into the past. It is the judgmental equivalent of having Washington use satellite imagery to locate the British troops or having Elliot Ness read Al Capone his rights. Typically, presentism is used to cast negative judgment against people in the past, to knock them off their pedestal, to take them down a notch, to make the judge, jury, and executioner of reputations in the present superior to the targeted person in history. It is not such much about setting the record straight as it is in being morally superior and self-righteous. There is no “walk a mile in someone’s shoes” or sensitivity in presentism.

Gibson used presentism in a different sense. Instead of retrojecting politically correct values to condemn someone in the past, he retrojected the values to create a community living in accordance with them. Gibson’s secret hideaway for fugitives from the British was a kumbaya community of people living in harmony with each other regardless of race or gender. Except for the fact that there was a war going on out there somewhere in the real world, Gibson’s “Gilligan’s Island” exemplified life as it should be lived in an idyllic setting. As one might expect, Gibson was taken to task for this artificial reality he created in the American and southern past.

Artists, unlike honest biographers, have choices to make about what to include or exclude in an artistic creation. After all, everything can’t be included. In the commencement address last spring at the University of Pennsylvania, Lin-Manuel Miranda discussed the power of stories to shape our lives and expressed the realization that story-telling is an act of pruning the truth, not representing it in its entirety. Miranda said:

Every story you choose to tell by necessity omits others from the larger narrative. One could write five totally different musicals from Hamilton’s eventful, singular American life … For every detail I chose to dramatize, there are 10 I left out. I include King George at the expense of Ben Franklin. I dramatize Angelica Schuyler’s intelligence and heart at the expense of Benedict Arnold’s betrayal. James Madison and Hamilton were friends, and political allies—but their personal and political fallout falls right on our act break, during intermission. (The Pennsylvania Gazette July/August 2016, 15)

Miranda’s Hamilton in one striking inclusion and one striking omission demonstrates that Mel Gibson is alive and well in the portrayal of the American Revolution. In his commencement address, Miranda referred to one of the defining stories this presidential election year.

In a year when politicians traffic in anti-immigrant rhetoric, there is also a Broadway musical reminding us that a broke, orphan immigrant from the West Indies built our financial system. A story that reminds us that since the beginning of the great unfinished symphony that is our American experiment, time and time again immigrants get the job done. (The Pennsylvania Gazette July/August 2016, 15)

Miranda is to be praised for reminding us that America from the start has been an unfinished experiment and that the journey continues. That expression is part of why Hamilton is the great sign that the journey will continue to be a successful one, that the work that still needs to be done, will be done. But he can be faulted for going overboard on Hamilton the pro-immigrant person based on politically correct values in the present. In the musical, the line “immigrants get the job done” generates the loudest applause. There is no doubting its theatrical effectiveness in New York City in 2015-2016 and beyond. There also is no doubting it is an example of Mel Gibson kumbaya.

In the musical, Hamilton and Lafayette high-five each other as they exclaim this thought. Technically, of course, Lafayette, was not an immigrant but a visitor. The musical does not specifically identify him as an immigrant but it is easy to infer that he is if one didn’t already know better. Immigration during the war wasn’t a big issue. There was more concern about Loyalist Brits returning and participating in the American political entity than about non-British immigration. It would be decades before immigration would become an issue with the arrival of America’s first “Moslems,” the Catholics who pledged loyalty to a foreign master and who were going to infiltrate and take
over the country. Do you know how many Catholics there are on the Supreme Court today? And as Republicans!? One may raise legitimate issues about how welcoming Federalist Protestant Hamilton would have been of the arrival of multitudes of riff raff. But not in the musical Miranda chose to write.

**In honor of Schuyler Slaves**

Similarly there is a race problem. Hamilton was not a slave owner and he did join John Jay’s manumission society. On the other hand, he did marry into a slave-owning family. Just recently, there was a ceremony at Schuyler Flatts in Colonie, just north of Albany, of the remains of 14 of the Schuyler slaves. They were first discovered during a construction project in 2005 and then analyzed by the New York State Museum in 2010. I tried to go there as part of Teacherhostel/Historyhostel, but was informed by the New York State archaeologist that there was nothing to see at Schuyler Flatts. It just was a flat piece of land. Now there are artistically-created burial coffins for these people. So while Hamilton casts some of the Schuyler daughters as black it does not address the slaves those daughters owned through their father. Not an easy subject for Miranda’s musical but an essential one for a biography by a historian.

Gibson’s presentism continues on in the AMC series *Turn*, another American Revolution story with 21st century values. I refer here not to John Graves Simcoe, the future founder of York, now named Toronto. In the TV series he is cast in the Darth Vader role as a “ruthless attack dog” according to the website. I am referring to Anna Strong, the older married woman with children who is transformed into a sexy tavern wench lusted for by men on both sides of the conflict. But at the *Turn* panel discussion at the New-York Historical Society last spring, the audience was informed that the character’s position would take a turn for the better in season three. She would be transformed this time into an active participant in the spy ring who travelled about and contributed to the decision made. Her travels take her to John André’s black servant, Abigail, a former slave in the Strong household. The scenes involving Anna, Abigail, and her son are dangerously reminiscent of Gibson’s kumbaya community in *The Patriot*. One might wonder if the enhanced role for the lead female figure was due to some new discovery or scholarship but that would be foolish. The decision, of course, was a marketing one to provide a character to appeal to the desired demographic. If changing this bewitching female into a witch would help ratings then that might be considered too except *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* already has that niche covered for the American Revolution.

Overall, it is good that there is such interest in the birth of the country. After all, we never were a country of one ethnicity or religion. That demographic diversity is part of the reason why we have continued to exist even as the number of ethnicities (Palatines-Irish-Italian-Indian) and religions (Methodist, Catholic, Jewish, Moslem) continues to grow. We are better as a country if we continually return to the story of our birth as country to make the story relevant to We the People today. Take a look at the story of the Exodus and see how many times Moses climbs up and down the mountain and all the activities at the mountain. You see examples of Exodus Midrash, the Jewish tradition of retelling the story of the foundation of the people, a tradition which continues today both in the different Passover ceremonies which are held and the different Exodus movies which are made. Mixed multitudes and diverse demographics become one in the ideas that constitute or covenant them as a single people. To stop telling the story of that birth is to die as a people, to cease to exist as a culture. But there are limits. The presentisms of Mel Gibson, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and AMC are not the first time the story of the American Revolution was retold and won’t be the last. In fact, part of the story of America, is the recognition that we are telling and retelling the story of our birth again and again.

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UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT MYSTIC SEAPORT AND NEW EDUCATION BROCHURE

September
Putting the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks into Action with Stephen Armstrong, Social Studies Consultant – CT State Department of Education
Wednesday, September 28, 4:30-6:30 FREE!
Join us as we dive into the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks! During this workshop, participants will discuss how the social studies frameworks can be effectively utilized by schools and museums as they evaluate the ways they educate students. The inquiry arc will be analyzed in great detail, with attention given to approaches to getting students to ask compelling questions. Methods to promote effective collaboration, both between students and educators, will also be a focus of this session. Participants will also experience a primary source workshop and leave with a Mystic Seaport inquiry-based lesson plan using objects from the Museum collection, featured on the Mystic Seaport for Educators primary source website! Pizza will be provided.

October
Science on the 38th Voyage of the Charles W. Morgan with Dr. Lisa Gilbert- Associate Professor of Geosciences and Marine Sciences with the Maritime Studies Program of Williams College and Mystic Seaport
Wednesday, October 5, 4-6 pm FREE!
This professional development workshop will introduce middle school teachers to a new science unit inspired by the 38th Voyage of the whaleship Charles W. Morgan. The six lessons in the unit merge history with science to encourage an enduring interdisciplinary connection between modern marine science and the experience of the nineteenth-century whaler. Each lesson includes a reading or activity that reflects one or more historic observations mariners conducted at sea. While these observations may not have been originally performed with scientific intent, students will learn the value of historical perspective on modern research. Each lesson is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and can be used as stand-alone material or in sequence, adaptable to any middle school science course. All of the lessons are free and linked to articles on Mystic Seaport’s 38th Voyage website and additional resources.

Contact Krystal Rose with more questions or to reserve your spot! Location directions given after reservations are made. krystal.rose@mysticseaport.org or 860.572.0711 ext. 5025.

NEW EDUCATION BROCHURE
We have several new programs this year that are designed to help meet aspects of the CT Social Studies Frameworks. Please visit ctssocialstudies.org to view the full brochure. To book a program, register online here http://www.mysticseaport.org/learn/k-12-programs/ or please contact Rebecca Shea at 860-572-5322, ext. 1 or Rebecca.shea@mysticseaport.org.

Visit the Connecticut Science Center and Wadsworth Atheneum on the same day for one low price! Two great experiences for just $13 per person. Select from two themed tours to best fit your curriculum and your students.

Leonardo da Vinci’s Engineering, Connecticut Innovators, and the Art of Science
Students will explore advances in the fields of engineering and art through the works of Leonardo da Vinci’s Simple Machines, and three Connecticut innovators, Samuel Colt, Alexander Calder, and Sol LeWitt. At the Connecticut Science Center your students will experience hands-on exploration of the engineering genius of 41 of da Vinci’s 148 engineering designs, then fast forward to discuss Samuel Colt’s improvements to gun manufacture with a focus on how they could re-engineer modern day objects in their own lives at the Wadsworth Atheneum. Your students will have a day filled with conversations about machines, movement in sculpture, engineering principals, and use a hands-on approach to understanding math-inspired wall drawings and sculptures. Curriculum connections to the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks, Visual Arts Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards.

The Renaissance Period: Art and Engineering during the Time of Leonardo da Vinci
Students will be immersed in Leonardo’s inventions as they get to explore many of the machines he designed during the Renaissance period while visiting the Connecticut Science Center and then take a tour focused on Renaissance and Baroque art at the Wadsworth Atheneum. Students will see examples of Leonardo da Vinci’s influence on artists of his time and will expand their understanding of the Renaissance and Baroque eras and develop a stronger understanding of the historical context of the time periods.
CONNECTICUT COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership in CCSS entitles you to:

• Reduced Registration for the CCSS Fall Conference
• Reduced Registration for the Northeast Regional Conference for the Social Studies (NERC)
• Convenient access to the Yankee Post, the CCSS online newsletter
• Opportunity to apply for ‘mini-grants’ of up to $500 for innovative curriculum in social studies and other special projects
• Opportunity to meet colleagues and develop a network of professional friends and associates
• Ability to keep up-to-date with developments in the social studies.

If you have always wanted to become a member of NCSS, now is the time to act. New membership subscriptions to NCSS will also give you membership benefits from Connecticut Council for the Social Studies for one year—a $20 savings. This offer applies to only new NCSS Regular or new Comprehensive members only who send in their form to CCSS. Joint member benefits include:

• All CCSS benefits
• Regular and Comprehensive membership in NCSS includes a subscription to Social Education or Social Studies and the Young Learner
• NCSS Comprehensive membership also includes all bulletins published during the membership year.

Please complete membership form. Make checks payable to CCSS and mail this form to CCSS, P.O. Box 5031, Milford, CT 06460.

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CCSS Membership (July 1- June 30) NEW NCSS Membership
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